

THE GOSPELS

FACT, MYTH, OR LEGEND?

**THE GOSPELS—
FACT, MYTH, OR LEGEND?**

Nihil Obstat

JACOBUS NICHOLSON, S.J.

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur

✠ HENRICUS,

Epūs Tipasæ.

EDIMBURGI, die 9 Maii 1923.

THE GOSPELS— FACT, MYTH, OR LEGEND?

BY

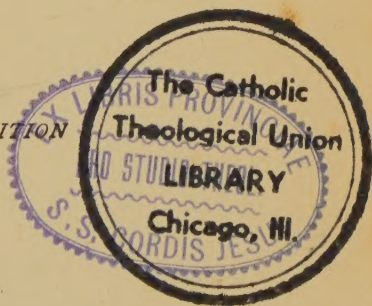
J. P. ARENDZEN, PH.D., D.D.
M.A. CANTAB.

WITH FOREWORD BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GASQUET

WITHDRAWN

225.01
4681g
SECOND EDITION



LONDON: SANDS & CO.,
15 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN
AND EDINBURGH

1929

Printed in Great Britain by
Joseph Leighton, 130 George Street, Edinburgh

TO
MY DEAR PARENTS
WHOSE
DEEP FAITH AND SAINTLY LIFE
TAUGHT ME
TO LOVE HIM
WHOM THE GOSPELS PORTRAY

FOREWORD

It seems to me quite unnecessary, and I would say almost an impertinence on my part, to introduce this volume of Essays. I read them with pleasure and profit when they appeared in the pages of that excellent periodical, the *Catholic Gazette*. More than once, after enjoying them I gave them to a friend, who was more competent than I felt myself to be, to judge of their merits, by reason of his extensive knowledge of New Testament questions and Early Christian origins, in order to see whether I rated them too highly. His verdict agreed with mine, and we both expressed our hopes that the papers would be collected and published in book-form. I was consequently more than pleased to find that this has been done, and so most gladly do I consent, at the request of the author, to write a brief "Foreword" to his small volume.

These *New Testament Essays* are divided here into two sections. The first deals with "The Credibility of the Gospels" and the second with

"New Testament Times." The papers are all written in the clearest language, which can be read with ease and pleasure, and every page shows that the writer has a complete mastery of his subject. They are never "dry-as-dust," and they convey in the most pleasing way most useful and interesting information on the all-important subjects about which they treat. To all who are interested in the New Testament—and, of course, all of us are—these papers will prove of great assistance to a fuller understanding and solution of many problems which the so-called critics have set us in regard to the Sacred Book.

Where all is so good, it is difficult to select any one Essay for special commendation. Those which perhaps appealed to me most, when I read them, were, in the first section, the Introductory Essay on "The Testimony of the Epistles" and the three papers on St John. In the second part (New Testament Times) I read with perhaps the greatest interest the Essay on "The World into which Christ was born" and the paper on "Herod, the Fox," which was truly an illumination.

But, I repeat, that one and all these Essays will repay reading and thought. They will, I am sure, afford pleasure and convey instruction,

even to those who are well read in the subject-matter about which they treat. I hope and trust, and believe that this small volume will have the wide circulation it certainly deserves.

A. CARDINAL GASQUET.

ROME, SAN CALLISTO,

4th June 1923.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THESE Essays first appeared as articles in the *Catholic Gazette* in the years 1918-1923, and the author thanks the editors for permission to reprint. They have been but slightly modified in form and in one instance considerably enlarged. Answers to correspondence, which arose out of the articles, have been embodied in a few Notes. The author wishes to thank Father A. B. Sharpe, M.A., for his kindness in helping him to remove certain unevennesses of style. The purpose of this volume is to render the Gospels credible to the average educated man, who is not a specialist in first-century history. The first part aims at this purpose directly, the second part indirectly by showing that New Testament times are in the full light of history, and though twenty centuries distant from us, none the less some of the best known to us. The added Essay on the use of the Bible wishes to recall the reader to that sound view of the relation between the Written Word and the Church, which alone makes Holy Writ truly profitable to the faithful.

J. P. A

THE MISSION HOUSE,
BRONDESBURY PARK, N.W.

January 1923.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE EPISTLES	I
II. ST LUKE	9
III. ST MARK	22
IV. ST MATTHEW	33
V. ST MATTHEW	43
VI. ST JOHN	51
VII. ST JOHN	63
VIII. ST JOHN	74
IX. THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE	89

PART II

NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

I. THE WORLD INTO WHICH CHRIST WAS BORN	95
II. OUR LORD'S ANCESTRY	110
III. THE VIRGIN-MOTHER	128
IV. HEROD, THE MAGI AND THE STAR	141
V. PONTIUS PILATE	155
VI. CAIAPHAS	170
VII. HEROD, THE FOX	188
VIII. THE RESURRECTION	205

APPENDIX :

THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	218
---	-----

(Paper read at the Catholic Bible Congress,
Cambridge, 1921.)

THE GOSPELS—
FACT, MYTH, OR LEGEND?

PART I
THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

PART II
NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

PART I

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

CHAPTER I

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EPISTLES

PRIESTS and zealous Catholics, desiring to prove the truth of their religion, naturally appeal to the wonders in word and in work to be found in the life of Christ and His disciples as told in the New Testament. They are often distressed and for a moment non-plussed by the daring flippancy and amazing audacity with which the whole New Testament is set aside as a collection of legends and idle tales, discredited by modern scholarship. As Catholics they feel what an Englishman would feel if he handed Cardinal Mercier's book, *The Voice of Belgium*, to a German and had it returned with a shrug and a smile and the words "All lies." At first they may be so overcome, as to find no words in reply, and on second thoughts the very clearness of the historical evidence remains so overwhelming that they are at a loss what to say first. In order to be of assistance in quickly and effectively setting forth the grounds of their belief in the absolute historicity of the New Testament, the following line of argument is suggested.

The New Testament is naturally divided into two parts almost of equal length. The first part is directly historical and contains the four Gospels

and the Acts of the Apostles; this sets forth the story of the Founder and His first followers, and covers a period of some sixty years. The second part is a collection of twenty-one letters written by the first preachers of the New Religion to their recent converts. The Book closes with a prophetic vision of one of Christ's followers in his old age.

Let us take the collection of letters first. Practically no modern scholar, who teaches at any University or recognized centre of learning, whether he be Christian or not, and who is acknowledged to be an expert in these matters, denies that the bulk of these letters, nine-tenths of them, was written between the years 50 and 90 A.D. of the first century, and three-fourths between 50 and 65 A.D. I postulated that he should be an expert in these matters and known to be such. To quote a Berlin professor of zoology or a Chicago professor of comparative anatomy on a question of first-century historical criticism of Greek documents is absurd. They know nothing about it. A bishop's word as such is not considered final on chemistry, nor is a professor's word final on questions he has not studied, and that he has studied them he must prove by teaching or writing. The only letter which is still impugned by some scholars as perhaps a second-century forgery is the short epistle known as Second Peter. The grounds of their suspicion, even when set out by the ablest of them, are very slight and insufficient. The best modern commentary by Professor Bigg of Oxford holds it to be a genuine letter of Peter, though written by another amanuensis than was his first letter. The letters to Titus and Timothy are thought by some to be fragments of Pauline letters pieced together after St Paul's death

or composed by one of his disciples, utilizing the thoughts and phrases of his master. There is, I think, very little to be said for this, from a scholar's point of view, but even if they were written about 80 A.D. from Pauline material, it would not matter to our argument; nor does it matter whether the Vision of St John was written soon after Nero's death, as many non-Catholics hold, or some twenty years later, as is more commonly believed. In the Second Part of the New Testament we have historical documents of the first class, written in a community which could not but know the facts about Christ and His followers, for Christ died at a comparatively early age under Pontius Pilate, and the bulk of His contemporaries outlived the Life which was cut short by the Crucifixion.

Perhaps the opponent will answer: Granted, but that section of the New Testament is concerned with exhortation and piety, with the doctrines of the new religion and not with historical facts. We reply: There is many a fact to be found in the Epistles by those who read them. Does not this deal with a fact: "Christ died for our sins . . . and He was buried . . . and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and (that) He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles, and last of all He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. . . . I persecuted the Church of God. For whether I or they, so we preach, and so you have believed." Now, all scholars agree that the letter in which this passage

4 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

occurs was written between 53 and 56 A.D., probably in the spring of 55 A.D. by Paul of Tarsus. Written therefore when the bulk of those who had witnessed the Resurrection were still alive, when those who had witnessed our Lord's public life were still to be counted by thousands. This is given as the uniform teaching of all the Twelve, the most intimate followers of Jesus of Nazareth, already well established and well known. Nor is the letter to the Corinthians the earliest of St Paul's letters. Galatians and Thessalonians are, say, five years earlier, and these Epistles assert the Resurrection of Christ as emphatically as Corinthians. We have, then, historical evidence of the belief held by tens of thousands that Christ rose from the dead within twenty years of the occurrence of the fact. "Legends and idle tales" about people having risen from the dead do not naturally spring up within twenty years after their death, nor are they believed by thousands who have every opportunity to ascertain the truth of the facts.

We shall not pick out the historical facts contained in the Epistles and St John's Apocalypse. We will rather sum up the whole historical situation vouched for by the whole collection of these writings, and shall do so by quoting Professor Harnack of Berlin, whom no one will accuse of being unduly orthodox. Speaking of the figure of Our Lord as portrayed in earliest Christian writings, he says: "Jesus Christ had been their life-experience, and in Him they had found the Messiah. They were convinced that God had made Him Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. No hope but found its security in Him, no exalted thought but found in Him a living reality. Hence they brought to Him

all they possessed. He was all that the human mind could conceive as most High. Within two generations of His death all has been said of Him whatsoever men are capable of predicating of any one. Yea, even more, they actually experienced Him and knew Him as the Everlasting One, as the Lord of the World and as the energizing principle of the life of their own souls. Christ is my life, and death is my gain, said St Paul; He is the Way, the Truth and the Life believed he who wrote the Gospel of John. Only now after Christ had come, were they certain of the Resurrection and of Eternal Life, and thus the sorrows of this world disappeared as a cloud is dissolved by the sun, and the remainder of their earthly life was light and day. This set of facts ushers the story of the Gospel into this world, and is at the same time the highest thing and the most unique in kind which meets us in the history of Christian doctrine. This great fact is as it were its seal, and makes this history different from the history of any other of the world's religions. Where in the story of the human race did ever happen aught like this? That those, who had actually taken food and drink with their Lord and Master, should praise Him not merely as a Revealer of God but as the Prince of Life, as Redeemer and Judge of the world, as the living force of their own existence, and that those immediate disciples should forthwith be joined by a multitude of Jews and heathens, of Greeks and barbarians, of the wise and of the simple, confessing that out of the fullness of that One Man they were receiving grace for grace? People have said that the Islam is the only example of a religion born in the noonday of history; but it is not so, the community

6 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

of Jesus Christ was also born at noonday and in the light thereof." So far Harnack. The letters of the disciples of Jesus in the New Testament are not the only source of information we possess. Tacitus, the greatest of Roman historians, tells us that the Emperor Nero, having set Rome on fire and dreading the anger of the people, threw the blame of what had happened on the Christians. The mob would readily believe this new sect capable of any crime. In consequence "an immense multitude," so says Tacitus, were put to death publicly in the Capital of the Empire, so many in fact that even the rude populace thought the measure had been exceeded and pitied the vast crowds thus delivered to incredible torments. When did this happen? Note the date, within thirty-five years of the death of Jesus of Nazareth, at a time when Jesus, had He lived to normal length of years, would have been but a man of about sixty-five years old! Where did it happen? In Rome, about a thousand miles away from where Jesus died under Pontius Pilate the Governor. Who was this Jesus of Nazareth, who shook the world within a few years of His death? To set aside His life with a shrug of the shoulders as idle legend is unworthy of a thinking man. Let me give two more examples of pagan historians, one of an earlier date, one of a later one. Suetonius tells us of the Emperor Claudius banishing the Jews from the city of Rome because they caused disorders under the leadership of a certain Chrestus about the year 45, that is, some fifteen years after Christ's death. Most scholars see in this Chrestus a confusion in the mind of a heathen with Christ, who is the true leader of Christians, in those days still regarded as a sect of the Jews.

Another witness is Pliny the Younger, born some thirty years after Christ's death, a high-placed official, who became Governor of Northern Asia Minor in 111 A.D., and who reports that apparently half, if not the majority, of the population there is Christian; that a number have been Christian as long as twenty years, and even from infancy; that the pagan religion seems dead and the temples deserted. Who was this Jesus of Nazareth who had hundreds of thousands of worshippers scattered over the Roman Empire, to whom whole populations *gave homage as to a god*, to use the words of Pliny? What is His story, where is His biography? To answer this question with a superior smile, to shrug one's shoulders and say, I don't know, is possible only for a man whose historical instinct has been totally destroyed by blind prejudice.

Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew. Have the Jews got His biography? No, but ever since the year 88 A.D. they have added to their most solemn prayer, to a prayer which every devout Jew is supposed to use daily, to a litany which embodies the age-long aspiration of Jewry, a bitter curse against the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. They have gone on repeating these words for well-nigh 2000 years, but as to the details of His life they observe a sullen and obstinate silence. Why? In the name of common sense, why? If the story which His followers told of Him was not true, what more effective remedy, what more irresistible argument against His hated disciples than to tell the real story of that Impostor as they knew it? If ever it were in the human interest of a set of men to spread far and wide the correct story of Jesus, a story which would kill the superstitious fanaticism that adored Him as a god and which would show that He

8 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

was but made of the common clay of men, it was in the interest of the Jews to contradict the story of His life by writing another and exposing the fables of the Christians to ridicule. Instead of that the Jews cursed Christians and affected to ignore the proofs for their claims. Of the greatest Figure in history, of Him whose life has affected the human race more deeply than that of any other person since the world began, there remains but one life-story: that given in the Gospels. It is written by those who knew Him best, it is written but a few years after His death, no one has dared to write another, and in *Lonely Majesty* it remained, cursed but ungainsaid. It is unworthy of an historian, unworthy of a thinking man to set it aside as a collection of fables. The easy smile at ancient legends is as fatuous in a twentieth-century lecture-room as the angry curse of Gamaliel was in the Synagogue of two thousand years ago.

CHAPTER II

ST LUKE

IN the previous chapter we put forward some thoughts on the Catholic defence of the credibility of the Gospels. The subject is so vast and the available space so limited that we could only bring forward one main suggestion, viz., that it is well to begin such a defence by an appeal to the testimony of the Epistles of the New Testament, those Epistles, I mean, whose date and authorship no scholar calls in question. We submitted that such an appeal, together with the undoubted facts of the astoundingly swift spread of Christianity in the first century, must bring home to every thinking man the need of a biography of Jesus of Nazareth. No true historian can rest till he has found the life-story of the Man, whose influence on His fellow-men has proved greater than that of any other human being since this world began. That Man was a Jew by birth, but the Jews deliberately refused to give us His life-story; they merely cursed Him after His death. Those, however, who followed Him, adored Him as God made Man, and they alone give us the facts of His life, and the facts of that life remained ungainsaid by those who would have destroyed Christianity at birth, had they proved them untrue.

However, all these considerations are external to

the Gospel documents, and we must proceed to a study of the Fourfold Gospel in itself to show that it is a reliable historical account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Before actually commencing this task, some one perhaps may ask: Is there not supposed to be a reference to Our Blessed Lord's life in a contemporary Jewish historian called Josephus, and had we not better consider that first, as even the man in the street has some confused notion of the existence of a spurious passage about Christ, the fraudulent insertion of which is not much to the credit of Christians? Is it wise just to pass this over in silence, because we are apparently ashamed of it?

We are far from being ashamed of it, for it helps to throw light on the real value of modern pseudo-criticism of the life of Christ.

Now, first: Who was this Josephus?

He was a Jewish priest, born at Jerusalem some seven years after Our Lord died, who after a long and stormy career, ended his life at Rome about 100 A.D. His life is well known. He was in command of the Jewish army in Galilee at the beginning of the great Jewish rebellion, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He was taken prisoner, but his life was spared, for he succeeded in ingratiating himself with his captors. He went, in fact, over to the enemy and was utilized by them as a go-between at the terrible siege of the Holy City. He remained a Jew indeed, but he was what we now would style "a liberal Jew," who thought his orthodox brethren utterly misguided in their insurrection against the noble Romans. He thought that the fanatical misinterpretations of the Messianic prophecies had brought ruin to his

people. He came into high favour at the Emperor's court, his "broad views" and his judicious flattery made him friends in highest circles, he even applied the Scripture prophecies to the Roman Emperor. He received a pension from the State and devoted himself to the writing of history. Proud in one sense of being a Jew, yet proud also of his attainments and culture, anxious to please, yet half sincere and not without ideals, this refined and liberal-minded Jew wrote about Jesus, that much-discussed prophet of his nation.

And what did he write? He wrote as follows:—

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one should call Him a man, for He was the doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him many, both of Jews and Greeks. He was the 'Christ'; and when Pilate at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared unto them alive after three days, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him, and the tribe of the Christians so named from Him, are not extinct at this day."

It was the fashion for many years to set this passage aside as an obvious interpolation by Christians. In fact, anyone who dared to quote it thereby proved himself unworthy of notice in the critical world. But critical fashions change. A few months before the war, the Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, Dr Burkitt, a name illustrious in the scholarly world, wrote to prove that the passage was clearly genuine, and the arguments alleged against it futile. Dr

Harnack, in Berlin, the champion of "liberal" Christianity, immediately accepted the reasoning of the English scholar. Since then Professor Emery Barnes has given his adhesion to the same opinion. Within a few years no scholar will dare to doubt its genuineness. In fact, the grounds for rejecting this passage were never very persuasive. There is no manuscript of Josephus that omits it. There is no writer previous to the sixteenth century who rejects it, or even doubts it. The passage is actually quoted in its entirety, as written by Josephus, by the famous Greek historian Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, which was published c. 325 A.D. Eusebius was probably the greatest book-lover of his time, but he had clearly never heard of a copy of Josephus without it. Nor has anyone since. Josephus certainly has passages about St John the Baptist and about St James, which passages no one at present doubts. Josephus obviously revered both St John and St James, the latter he actually calls: "the brother of Jesus who is called the Christ." Josephus tells the history of his people, especially contemporary history, in minute detail—almost year by year; he refers to James as the brother of Jesus, and yet we are asked to believe that the passage about Jesus Himself is a fraudulent insertion by some Christian. But a Christian would not have used the haughty and disdainful phrase: "the tribe of the Christians." By the beginning of the second century he recited in the Apostles' Creed that he believed in the holy Catholic Church; in his oldest prayer-book, dating from about 80 A.D., he was told to pray at the Eucharist for "Holy Church." That he should have used such phraseology about the Church is as

likely as that we should refer to "the sect of the Papists."

A Christian would have betrayed himself by the standing Christian formula for the Resurrection, viz., He rose again the third day; a Christian does not naturally use the quaint words: He appeared to them alive after three days. A Christian would hardly have thought it much that his tribe "was not extinct" at that time, for he counted his brethren by the hundred thousand in every land from Spain to Persia; to describe them as not extinct would indeed have been to damn with faint praise.

But how could a Jew, who remained a Jew, call Jesus the Christ? If he believed he was the Messiah he was a Christian and ceased to be a Jew, you say. That depends how we understand the phrase. If we put "the Christ" in inverted commas, we get at the meaning of Josephus. Most of his readers had heard about "the Christ." Nero had put to death an immense multitude of the followers of this "Christ." Domitian had put to death even members of the Imperial Household for following this "Christ." Now Jesus was this "Christ," says Josephus to his readers. He does not imply that he believed Jesus to be indeed what He was called.

But, then, does not this Jewish historian really seem to believe that Jesus was the one foretold "by the divine prophets"? No, not necessarily: he gives but a description of the claim made by the Christians. Do not forget that, from the days of St Paul, the Christians claimed and repeated a thousand times that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again *according to the Scriptures*; and Jews heard constantly from the lips of Christians what the disciples going

to Emmaus heard from the lips of Christ: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His Glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Him" (Luke xxiv. 25, 26).

But, surely Josephus speaks of Jesus in an appreciative tone? Yes, he does: he was a liberal, and not an orthodox Jew; he apparently revered John and James and Jesus. Josephus was indeed intensely proud of his race, but he had broken with his compatriots, he had gone over to the Romans and had become their pensioner. He loathed the fanaticism which had cruelly murdered such noble figures as James and Jesus. The Christians—the followers of the meek, yet wonderful Jesus of Nazareth—had had no share in the wild orgy of fanaticism which brought Jerusalem to ruin. He could write respectfully and even with a touch of awe about this Jesus, he could write calmly and condescendingly about the Christians from his comfortable house in Rome. The Montefiores of to-day can speak about the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth almost with the accent of Christians—why could not Josephus?

However, this passage of Josephus is but a side issue, our theme is the Gospels themselves. Now in the defence of the Gospels it is well to deal with the Gospel of St John separately, and to reserve the treatment thereof till later. Both in intrinsic characteristics and external circumstances it stands by itself, whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke are often called Synoptic Gospels, or Gospels written from the same point of view. It is a well-known fact that these three tell the

life-story of Our Blessed Lord in the same way ; they give substantially the same facts, mostly in the same order, and often in the same words. Suppose that the Gospel of St Mark were lost, we would lose some vivid details, some picturesque description, but we would lose practically none of the facts, for as far as facts go the whole of St Mark's Gospel can be reconstituted out of St Matthew and St Luke. At first sight St Mark looks like an abbreviated copy of St Matthew, omitting the story of the Birth and Infancy, and almost all our Lord's words. St Luke differs from St Mark in giving the story of the Birth and Infancy in greater detail than St Matthew, and obviously from another source of information—St Matthew is often said to have got his information from St Joseph, and St Luke from Our Lady. Again, St Luke gives a section of Our Lord's ministry and a set of parables not to be found in either St Matthew or St Mark, and he is very much fuller with regard to the happenings after the Resurrection.

The best defence of these three Gospels consists in the defence of St Luke. Now few historians have ever been so triumphantly vindicated as being first-class evidence as St Luke. St Luke happens to be also the author of the Acts of the Apostles—in fact, Gospel and Acts are only two volumes of one and the same work. We have in consequence ample material whereby to test his veracity and his mettle as historian. In his work he mentions many scores of persons, places and dates. He covers some sixty years of history, he moves from Palestine to Syria, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece and Italy : he speaks of roads and cities, seas and harbours ; he employs technical titles of burgo-masters, magistrates, governors ; he gives the proper names of officials in office in a precise place at a precise

moment, and he puts words into their mouths, and professes to record their decisions. There is nothing vague or hesitating about him—he loves dates and reigns and precision. He tells you about heathen temples and Jewish synagogues; he tells you not only what was said, but the precise dialect in which it was said. He moves through the whole Græco-Roman world from A.D. 1 to A.D. 60 with the perfect ease of a man who knows his own age and his own world.

Now remember we are dealing with the noonday of history, with a period which has been more studied and better investigated than perhaps any other period of human history. They were classical times, the times of the greatest glory of the Roman Empire, the days of Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, who are to us not mere names as are the names of our Kings of the English Heptarchy. The world in which St Luke moves is the Greek world, and there are Greek and Roman writers in abundance who have dealt with those times: in fact, the persistent study of generations of classical students has left very little unexplored.

If St Luke wrote fiction instead of fact, if he used the excellent Greek he wrote to deceive his readers, pretending to know scenes and places, and persons and speeches, which he had never seen or heard, but merely invented, how is it that after the closest scrutiny he has never as yet been convicted of the slightest inaccuracy—nay, not even of an historical improbability? He relates miracles, of course, and an *a priori* philosophy rules them out—they cannot have happened! But the unbiassed historian knows nothing about what CAN happen, he is concerned with what HAS happened; and in order to find out

what HAS happened, he examines his witnesses, their character and their testimony, and, if they are manifestly credible witnesses, he can afford to smile at an *a prioristic* philosophy that refuses to acknowledge inconvenient facts.

Here is one example out of a hundred of how St Luke has triumphed over his foes. St Luke tells us that in the days of Cæsar Augustus and of Herod the Great there was a census or enrolment of the whole world, in consequence of which everyone, man or woman, had to go to his or her own place of birth to be registered, and that Joseph and Mary went on the occasion of the first Census, which was made when Cyrinus was Governor of Syria.

Time was when a supercilious scholarship asserted that there were almost as many blunders as there were words in the above statement. Cæsar Augustus did not order a census. If there was a census at any time in Palestine, it could not have been in the reign of Herod the Great. A census of one small district was possible, but a census of the whole Empire was a monstrous historical stupidity. The height of folly was reached by the statement that everyone had to go to his own native place to be enrolled. Imagine the incredible dislocations of travel and commerce as a result! In any case, women could not have had anything to do with it. Cyrinus certainly was never Governor of Syria during Herod's reign, or held a "first census" as distinguished from a second one.

So they spake once upon a time ; but now ?

Yes, there *was* a census every fourteen years throughout the Empire, a system which lasted several hundred years, and almost certainly began with the first Emperor Augustus. Yes, Cyrinus *was* no doubt

in office even during the reign of Herod. Yes, people *had* to go in person to their own native place, not only men, but women also. Yes, there *was* no doubt a first census under Cyrenus in 4 B.C., although Cyrenus was in office again later on.

A dozen years ago people might be found who said that the whole census story was a blundering invention of Luke, who knew, of course, that Christ came really from Nazareth, but who wanted Him to have been born at Bethlehem, because He had to fit in the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in the City of David. Now, it looks as if it were not Luke who blundered after all.

The very census papers, duly filled in, were found in Egypt, proving conclusively that a census throughout the Roman Empire, of everyone in his own home, *was* held!

Let us give just one more instance of St Luke's remarkable accuracy even in smallest detail—the very minuteness of detail is the point to note. St Paul travelled, again and again, through Asia Minor. The geography of Asia Minor at the time of Christ was one of extreme intricacy. A foreigner may be nonplussed by the weird outlines of English counties, but they are regularity and simplicity itself compared with the divisions of Asia Minor. There were the ancient boundaries of the former native States, and the more modern but ever-changing boundaries of the Roman Provinces, and the territories of the Greek City States, and of the Roman Colonial overlapping and intertwining. To make confusion worse confounded there was a veritable Babel of different native languages, such as Celtic, or Phrygian, and Lycaonian; there was Latin, too, the language of

the Colonials; and Greek, the polite language of the Eastern world, which only Christianity finally brought to triumph. St Luke says that St Paul crossed the whole of Asia Minor from the South-eastern to the North-western corner. Had St Luke not possessed a sure and intimate knowledge of facts, how easy for him to make a slip and betray that he was only trading on his imagination! For instance: in Acts xiv. 5, St Luke says that Paul and Barnabas fled from Iconium "to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe, and the adjacent urban district," to escape the persecution of the Iconium Jews. In Lystra they cured the lame man, and the people cried out in Lycaonian to express their amazement. Formerly it was said: this is a mistake, Iconium was itself in Lycaonia—classical writers say so. St Luke did not know this, hence he made a blunder similar to a foreigner saying, "a man fled from Liverpool into the cities of Lancashire!"

However, it has now been proven that Iconium was in Phrygia, and not in Lycaonia. They were both indeed in the Roman Province of Galatia, but the native line of demarcation included Iconium in Phrygia. Natural geography might easily have misled St Luke, as it misled the moderns, for Iconium certainly lies on the Lycaonian plain. But for all that it was a city of Phrygia, and if moderns had read the classics more carefully they would have realized it. St Luke knew, for the fact was told him by Barnabas or Paul, that the people in Lystra spoke Lycaonian, a language the Apostles had not heard before, whilst in Iconium the common people spoke Phrygian—tombstones with Phrygian inscriptions are extant to-day to prove the fact. Greek was

the language of culture, but Phrygian was still currently spoken there in 200 A.D. Again, why should St Luke speak about the perichorion—what we may call the urban district? Because St Paul, and therefore St Luke, knew precisely the charter of the county-borough of Iconium. The Apostles were attacked not merely by a mob, but officially, by order of the mayor and aldermen of the borough, as the Acts tell us ; and the limit of their authority was the boundary of the urban district. Once out of the urban district of Iconium and the Apostles were safe. There were milestones from city to city ; some of these milestones have been found and are extant to-day. It was a question of life and death for Barnabas and Paul to reach the boundary stone in time. Once past it, and they could smile at the bumbledom of the Phrygian country town. A run for life along a couple of miles of road is not easily forgotten. So St Luke came to hear of it from the fugitives themselves.

These two instances show how the reliability of an historian can be tested. Luke has been tested to the uttermost, and never found wanting. He was the friend and companion of St Paul, born at Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. According to Acts xi. 27, he was one of the leading priests there before '45 A.D. He must have been a Christian within a few years of Pentecost day, if he was not a convert of Whitsuntide itself. He was obviously a man of great ability and Greek culture, he was within the innermost circle of the first followers of Jesus. He was of the same age as Our Lord would have been, had not Our Lord died in early manhood. His native tongue

was the same as that of Our Lord and His Apostles, for the bulk of the population at Antioch spoke Aramaic as they did at Jerusalem, and, furthermore, St Luke shows that he knew it, large portions of his Gospels being clearly translations from the language of the Jews, though St Luke writes good Greek elsewhere.

St Luke writes carefully, soberly, minutely, and wherever we can check him, with astounding accuracy. He tells his tale with transparent honesty, and not many years after writing it sealed his conviction by dying for the truth of it as a Christian martyr. His book was acknowledged to be the standard work on Christ and His first followers, by the Christians from Spain to the Persian Gulf, within hardly more than a generation after his death. Its facts are not contradicted by any contemporary historians; friend and foe alike treat him as a primary source of evidence.

Is there any other historian of that period with better credentials than Luke of Antioch? What grounds can any reasonable man have for rejecting his testimony except such *a priori* sectarian prejudice as that "miracles do not happen," and its corollary that historians who say they did must be men of "low intelligence and high credulity," if not indeed scheming liars?

CHAPTER III

ST MARK

WE suggested that in defence of the credibility of the Gospels it would be well to begin with an appeal to the testimony of the Epistles of SS. Paul, Peter, James and John, whose date and authorship no one disputes, and then to proceed to a description of the nature of the longest historical document contained in the New Testament, namely, the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, written by one Luke of Antioch, whose reliability and accuracy as historian modern scholarship has so amazingly vindicated.

St Luke's Gospel, however, is but one of three biographies which relate Our Lord's life from the same point of view. No one who has listened, even with moderate attention, to the short sections from the Gospels read out at Mass, on Sundays and holidays, but must have noticed that SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke differ but very slightly in telling the same story.

A different word now and then, a sentence differently construed, some short but vivid detail inserted, that is all; but for these trifling variations it is all the same for the ordinary listener whether the particular incident is told by the first, second or third of the Evangelists. For those who are schooled in such matters, however, just these slight changes are of

absorbing interest, and have been studied in many hundreds of critical commentaries. Moreover, even the ordinary layman will naturally ask: Why THREE biographies instead of ONE, considering the differences are so slight?

Thus at least thought the earliest Christians, and as they were severely practical, they carried out their thought into deed. About the year 160 A.D. a Christian writer carefully combined Matthew, Mark, and Luke, scrupulously retaining their very wording wherever possible, and omitting no item of the story, however insignificant; and then he joined it to the Gospel of St John, which he inserted in appropriate places, and thus formed one continuous Life of Our Lord in the very words of the inspired writers.

His work was a splendid success. For over 400 years it was used by all Syriac-speaking Christians, that is, in Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia. It went by the name of "THE FOUR COMBINED" and for a long time completely ousted "THE FOUR SEPARATE." Greek- and Latin-speaking Christians never took kindly to this practical solution, and we in the West have always been faithful to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as different and distinct authors.

Still there remains the question: How is it that there should be three short biographies of Our Lord, the same, and yet not quite the same? Let me tell you: Christianity is not a mere new Code of Laws, Christianity is not a mere new set of doctrines, Christianity is not just a new mode of getting to heaven: Christianity is CHRIST. The Apostles going through the whole world did not just proclaim a long list of revealed dogmas, a long list of God-given pre-

cepts, a new scheme of salvation. Judaism would still be Judaism without Moses, Islam would still be Islam without a Mohammed, Buddhism still Buddhism even without a Buddha, for they are simply religious systems which can be learnt without the life-story of their founders, who are mere instruments for the propagation of a set teaching. Christianity is not such; Christianity is Christ. It is the only religion which consists in a living union with the very Person of its Founder. The Apostles went out to the world and preached Christ. "I know nothing," said St Paul, "but Christ, and Him Crucified." The first and most vital need of the missionaries who preached the new religion was some *Sanctified Life of Christ*.

As long as the Apostles remained in Palestine, in Jerusalem, Samaria or Galilee, the main outlines of Our Blessed Lord's life were known to most of their hearers. These Apostles, however, could not go far outside their own little country, not much larger than Yorkshire, without having to tell Our Lord's life to people who had never heard of Jesus of Nazareth at all. And even in their own little country during the ten or twelve years they remained there after Our Blessed Lord's death, though thousands were acquainted with some particular scene or miracle of Jesus of Nazareth, there was soon the imperative need of having a set list of Doings and Sayings of Christ, which it was desirable that every convert should know.

The Apostles soon agreed on a fixed set of lessons which their new disciples would have to learn. Of course, every Apostle and eye-witness could add to it or vary it as he chose, when actually speaking to his converts; but it was an elementary precaution that

It would not be fair to the experienced critics or teachers of literature to make much of the irregularities of the Lord's Life which are marked down through the history. Moreover the time of introduction of a new work is important in the first years could not all be taught by the experienced teachers in person. They employed excellent teachers and assistants many of whom had not witnessed the scenes they had to teach. They also required some assistance of students for their own guidance.

In the second course we present the chronological history of the Lord's Life as by Peter used to give them. This is now admitted practically by all teachers and preachers. On other and more important points of course by all will have any just cause to quarrel.

When the second course opens very appropriately with the words: "The beginning of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." This Gospel contains an account of our Lord's history because it is the official history of the people chosen themselves to teaching and they themselves had witnessed and of which they were the first-hand witnesses. Of course they might have heard through the Blessed Lady or St. Joseph or the Lord's mother and fellow-servants of Nazareth a great deal of the early life, but their own experience began with the baptism of St. John, and it is natural that they should begin with their own experience. When St. Peter speaks of the one hundred and twenty who gathered together to appoint an apostle instead of Judas the traitor he intended what he intended the word of St. Paul to be: "Of the men who have had company with us all the time that the Lord

Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He ascended from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection." St Peter's Gospel, then, covers the period from the baptism of John to the Ascension.

But is it not a far-fetched modern inference to call the Gospel of St Mark the Gospel of St Peter? No. It is abundantly attested, right up to the very beginning of the second century, when some of those who knew St Mark may still have been living. Here is an explicit testimony:—

"Mark, being Peter's interpreter, wrote with accuracy whatever he remembered, though not in order, of the things spoken or done by Christ. For he did not hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him, but later, as I said, Peter, whose teaching he adapted to circumstances, without making an ordered scheme of the Lord's sayings. So that Mark was not to blame for writing in this way things as he remembered them. For he was careful neither to leave out any of the things which he heard, nor to falsify anything amongst them." Many of the best scholars see in the above quotation the words of St John the Apostle himself, but even if the speaker is not John the Apostle, but some other John, called the Elder, the words cannot well be later than 100 A.D., not later, I venture to say, than a score of years after the death of St Mark.

Even in these enlightened days, an idea (fostered by R.P.A. Manuals) still obtains, that the Gospels cannot compare with the Latin and Greek classics for early attestation and historic proofs of genuine authorship. The people who entertain this idea

live in fairyland, or rather, I should say, in the land of gloom darkened by mists of prejudice. The Gospels rank amongst the best attested works of the Græco-Roman world. They are better attested than the works of Pindar, or Xenophon, or Horace; of Pliny, Polybius, or Suetonius; of Terence or Plautus, Sophocles or Euripides, or of a score of others, the genuineness and authenticity of whose writings are cheerfully accepted by every classical scholar in the world.

For instance: Is there a Greek historian more unquestionably received, more absolutely believed, more respected as an utterly reliable source of information than Thucydides? Yet, the first allusion to Thucydides as author of his works occurs some two hundred and twenty years after his death, in the pages of another historian called Polybius!

Is there a Latin author more unhesitatingly accepted as an authority on the state of Roman society in 120 A.D. than Juvenal? Is there a classical scholar to-day who rejects him, or who dares to say that he is not first-class evidence for the customs and morals of the early second century? And, yet, there is no attestation to him as author of his works within two hundred and sixty years of his death, the first reference occurring in Ammianus A.D. 390.

St Mark is witnessed to by his own contemporaries. In a document, which not even the most exaggerated scepticism of modern days has ventured to doubt, I mean the First Epistle of St Peter, St Peter himself refers to him as "Mark, my son"; St Paul, in the little letter to Philemon, which I believe no one has ever doubted, sends greetings of "Mark" to his friend

in Asia Minor. In the letter to the Colossians we find enclosed the kind regards of "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas," St Paul's great friend and first protector. St Luke in the Acts refers to John surnamed Mark, for Mark's mother Mary was the lady of the house to which Peter fled after his delivery from Herod's prison; and Peter was well known at that house, for Rhoda, the little servant-maid who answered the door, when Peter knocked and in a whisper asked for admittance, instantly recognized his voice. Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Mark evidently was with Peter and Paul at Rome in the last years of their lives. The testimony of this Mark having written down the Gospel story as St Peter used to tell it, reaches back to people who had every opportunity of knowing him personally, for whether "the Elder" mentioned by Papias be John the Apostle or some other John at Ephesus makes little difference. This testimony is corroborated again and again by independent witnesses in that same second century, and throughout the centuries it is never gainsaid or doubted. Irenæus, who was born soon after 100 A.D. in Asia Minor, who knew Rome well, and who finally became bishop in France, states that: "Mark, the interpreter and disciple of Peter, has handed down in written form to us the things preached by Peter." Justin, a heathen philosopher, who became a Christian in 130 A.D., and who wrote a long "Open Letter" to the reigning Roman Emperor in favour of the Christians, quotes Mark iii. 17, as from "The Memoirs of Peter." Tertullian, a convert lawyer about 180 A.D., in what is now Tunis in Africa, states: "What Mark published may be described as

Petrine, for Mark was Peter's interpreter." Clement, a Greek, born of pagan parents at Athens soon after 140 A.D., one of the most literary men of that cultured age, who left us a number of his books, and who taught at the greatest centre of literature in that century, Alexandria, writes: "As Peter had publicly preached the word in Rome and proclaimed the Gospel by the spirit, many who were there besought Mark, as one who had followed him a long time and remembered his sayings, to draw up a narrative of them. And he composed the Gospel and gave it to those who asked for it. Peter, when he learned this (*i.e.* the pressure put on Mark to write) did not directly forbid nor promote it."

Perhaps the reader is wearied with quotations, but it is well just for once to show that when we say that St Mark's Gospel is but St Peter's catechetical instructions on the Life of Our Lord by one who heard Him a thousand times, we are saying something which rests upon solid historical proof, something which no sane man or fair thinker has any business to doubt, something which is established as well, if not better than any other fact connected with the literature of that same century. And why indeed should people scattered over an area of a thousand miles, people of different speech and nationality, of different tradition and upbringing, combine to tell a needless lie? Or, how could a number of first-class literary men in widely distant countries, and under totally different circumstances, literary men who were thoroughly acquainted with the innermost Christian circles, regard something as a literary fact and remain uncontradicted by anyone, if that fact were not true?

We have then in St Mark the series of incidents of

Our Lord's Life as they were publicly and officially told to Christian converts all over the world soon after they happened, when thousands upon thousands of people were still living who could bear witness to their truth.

Of late years it has become common to place St Mark very early indeed. Just before the war, even in Berlin, not precisely the home of Christian orthodoxy, Harnack felt inclined to put it at 45 A.D. Archdeacon Allen, who is certainly not markedly conservative in his writings, but who is certainly one of the best scholars we have at present in England, thought in 1915 that the most likely period for the first writing down of Peter's teaching by John Mark would be between 44 and 49 A.D., when Peter was absent from Jerusalem, and St Mark's shorthand notes would be first required to replace the living voice of the Apostle.

Be that as it may, practically all, one may say all, non-Catholic scholars hold that Mark's Gospel preceded St Matthew's and St Luke's, and therefore they cannot put it later than 65 A.D. at the utmost.

But what about St Matthew and St Luke? you say. Did St Matthew, an Apostle himself, deign for a large part simply to copy from St Mark, not an eye-witness and a mere young disciple? Besides, have we not always understood that St Matthew's was the *first* Gospel?

A detailed answer we hope to give in the next chapter: this much may be said now. St Matthew's Gospel is about twice as long as St Mark's, not only because he adds the story of Our Lord's Infancy, but because he gives long speeches of Our Lord, His Parables and Similitudes, which St Mark totally

omits. Perhaps St Peter reserved the *Sayings* of Our Blessed Lord for separate treatment afterwards. In any case, St Mark is mainly concerned with facts, with only short words from Our Blessed Lord's lips inserted now and then.

It is only natural that St Matthew, when he wrote his Gospel, should have adopted as a framework the catechetical teaching which the Christians at Jerusalem knew so well, the very wording of which I dare say hundreds knew by heart, and which had the sanction of St Peter, the chief of the Christian body. We moderns in the West have lost the practice of memorizing long texts. Not long ago a convert in Uganda surprised the missionary who had given him a copy of the Gospel of St Luke by saying after a while: "I know it now," and indeed he did: every word of the Gospel from the first to the last. The usual qualifications of a choir-monk in the early Middle Ages was to know the Psalter by heart, a much longer text than that of St Mark. The Orientals have not changed much in this respect. With bodies slightly swaying to and fro, with voices raised to a rhythmical sing-song, they repeat the lesson given by the master till they know it verbally, never to forget it. Not only at primary schools, but even in the classes of the "University of Cairo" to-day, hundreds of prospective Ulemas spend hours and days in memorizing prodigious lengths of the Koran. Such was the East, too, in St Peter's day.

St Matthew, of course, could treat St Peter's lessons with freedom. He himself was an Apostle, he himself had witnessed with his own eyes almost as much as St Peter. As a matter of fact, in one part of his Gospel he changes considerably the order of

the incidents as given in St Mark. As we have heard before from John the Elder, St Mark gave the incidents in the order in which St Peter used to tell them, and not in chronological order. St Mark probably did not know the precise order, though St Peter knew, as he doubtless had practical reasons for telling them in this way. St Mark had not been an eye-witness, except probably for the story of the Passion, which he seems to have from personal observations, and it seems likely that his mother was in charge of the upper room where the Last Supper was held. In any case, he was only a young lad at the time.

St Matthew adds a number of incidents from the fund of his own knowledge, many of which we find also in St Luke, who himself adds items which he had laboriously and accurately gathered from many sources.

Thus Our Lord's Triple Biography was set forth to be completed by the Venerable St John, Our Lord's own chosen disciple, who struck out on new lines; not telling once more what Peter told, or Matthew, or some other Apostle, but rather on purpose omitting what they had already narrated, thus giving us an aspect of Our Lord's life, fresh and new, and worthy of the bosom friend of God made Man.

CHAPTER IV

ST MATTHEW

WE may have shown that St Luke is a respectable historian, we may have shown that St Mark gives us substantially the instructions of Peter on the life of Christ, but must we admit with regard to St Matthew that no scholar nowadays believes that the Publican whom Christ called to the Apostolate was really the author of the Gospel that goes by his name? Two of the four Gospels are badly discredited in our days: Matthew and John. Christ's biography is seriously affected and impaired thereby.

Of St John we shall speak another time. Now first about St Matthew. Supposing for a moment we allowed the modern contention that Matthew the Publican is not the author of the first Gospel as we at present know it; supposing we agreed with our adversaries (which we do not), what would it all amount to?

All agree, because the evidence is too strong to be gainsaid, that St Matthew wrote "The Sayings" of Jesus. These "Sayings," so it is contended, are, however, not our first Gospel. They are none the less incorporated in our first Gospel, and are the very reason why it assumed the name of "Gospel according to St Matthew"—and they constitute at least two-fifths of its whole text. Thus, after all, two-

fifths of our present St Matthew is certainly by St Matthew. If we distinguish between the Sayings of Our Blessed Lord and His miracles, there are only four miracles wrought by Christ, mentioned by St Matthew alone without parallel in the other Gospels, that of the blind and dumb demoniac, of Peter walking on the water, of the coin in the fish's mouth and the blind and lame healed in the Temple, and also the appearance of Our Lord to Pilate's wife—all other miracles are found in St Mark or St Luke. The substance of St Mark is to be found almost completely in St Matthew, who usually narrates the incidents a little more briefly in order apparently to be able to give more of the Sayings of Our Lord, which St Mark has reduced to a minimum.

The historical facts therefore of Our Lord's Public Life in St Matthew are endorsed, practically completely, by St Luke and St Mark, whereas the Sayings are certainly recorded by St Matthew himself. Moreover, the present St Matthew, though many moderns will not allow the Apostle-Publican as its author, was yet compiled at a time when that Apostle might still have been living, say between 65 and 75 A.D. The historian, therefore, can well afford to smile and shrug his shoulders, saying with the Frenchman, "*Plus que ça change plus que ça reste la même chose!*" or with the Englishman, "Shakespeare was not written by Shakespeare, but by someone else of the same name, who wrote at the same place and time!" But what grounds may there be why St Matthew himself cannot have written the Gospel that goes by his name? Are they such that they prove the impossibility of his authorship?

It is said that it is obvious that the compiler of

the present St Matthew, in the narrative part, had St Mark's Gospel before him, and simply freely copied him, abbreviating him somewhat and making him read more smoothly—for St Mark's is simple, rugged language indeed. Now, they say it is inconceivable that an Apostle, who was himself a primary witness of Christ's life, should have condescended to copy someone much younger who had never seen Our Lord, except perhaps, during His Passion.

If St Mark was purely and simply St Mark's own work, composed entirely by himself, there might perhaps be something said for this contention; but if St Mark is but St Peter's teaching, if St Mark is but the Christian teaching of Our Lord's life, standardized at Jerusalem, perhaps as early as 45 A.D. as Archdeacon Allen thinks, would it be so unnatural if St Matthew, though Apostle, should have utilized the text of this teaching? It might have been below his "dignity" to copy John Mark, but was it below his "dignity" to copy Simon Peter?

Besides, the stress laid on the copying is surely somewhat overdone. St Matthew, to a considerable extent, changes the order of the narratives in St Mark. Would any one but an Apostle be likely to change the order of so great an authority as John Mark, Peter's son and Paul's companion? St Luke, though he adds to Mark's narrative, hardly interferes with the order. Though Matthew and Mark are very similar, still it remains a fact that it is difficult to find more than half a dozen words in sequence precisely the same in both Evangelists.

They say that the Gospel of St Matthew presents a more advanced stage in Christian thought than the

36 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

Gospel of St Mark. Matthew changes St Mark, not merely just abbreviating him and making the Greek read more smoothly, but he deliberately modifies the Marcan text in a threefold direction :—

- (a) Of greater reverence for the Person of Our Lord.
- (b) Of greater consideration for the conduct of the twelve Apostles.
- (c) Of greater caution not to shock his readers and not to provoke awkward questions.

This looks very formidable, but let us not forget that the whole tenor of St Matthew's Gospel is against its being written later than 65-75 A.D., and that this "later and more advanced stage in Christian thought" is then after all only a question of say a dozen years, and, after all, still remains within the possible lifetime of St Matthew himself, the Apostle-Publican. St Peter was cut short by martyrdom in 67 A.D. Is there any proof that St Matthew must have died before? Why could not these changes be the work of St Matthew himself? And now let us look at these changes which are so much talked about.

St Mark will speak of Our Lord "looking around in anger and sorrow," being "full of pity," being "amazed," being "excited in spirit," being "indignant." St Matthew omits most of these expressions.

St Mark once speaks of Christ's being prevented by people's unbelief from doing miracles : "He could do no mighty work there, save that He laid His hands on a few of the sick and healed them and He marvelled at their unbelief." St Matthew writes not "He could not do," but "He did not." St Mark makes Our Lord ask questions. St Matthew omits most of them,

apparently because he knew Our Lord was all-wise and need not ask questions. St Matthew seems to narrate Our Lord's miracles sometimes in a fashion so as to heighten the wonderful character of them. For instance, that of the demoniac boy healed after the Transfiguration. In St Mark, Our Lord bade the evil spirit come forth, whereupon "having cried out and rent him sore, he came out. And he became as one dead, so that many said he had died." St Matthew omits all these details, simply saying, "the demon came forth from him." We cannot, in this chapter, go through the scores of details which belong to a commentary on Matthew. Let this suffice. Matthew also says that Our Lord marvelled, that He felt pity; Matthew certainly portrays Our Lord as angry and indignant, driving out the money-changers from the temple, overthrowing their tables and the seats of them that sold doves, saying: "Ye have made it a den of thieves." The most fierce and terrible denunciations are to be found in Matthew, not in Mark: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make a long prayer. Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation! Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves! Woe to you, blind guides, ye fools and blind, ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Blind Pharisees, cleanse first what is within that the outside may be clean also! Woe to you, whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Outwardly ye appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Ye are the children of them who killed

the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!"

Now, all this occurs in the first Gospel, and none of it in the second. Is it likely that the author of the first Gospel should have on purpose omitted from St Mark that Our Lord was "angry," because he did not like to ascribe to Him any human emotions? St Matthew is supposed to have purposely changed St Mark, and not recorded that He felt sorrow, in order to hide Our Lord's human frailty, but in the Passion Story it is Matthew and Mark who record that He began to be sorrowful and sad, saying: "My soul is sorrowful unto death." Surely Matthew might have omitted this as St Luke DOES—and St John.

It is St Matthew and St Mark who record the terrible cry from the Cross: "God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Surely if St Matthew was inclined to change St Mark because he feared to show that Our Lord was human as well as divine, he *ought* to have omitted that sad and mysterious cry as St Luke and St John omit it. What was the good of studiously omitting such a phrase as "He looked round in anger and sorrow," and leaving such things in the story of His Passion? Is it not a thousand times more reasonable to suppose that St Matthew, having determined to give Our Lord's own *words* to a large extent, and only record His *acts* as briefly as possible, following the framework of Peter's *Catechesis*, unconsciously omitted explaining Our Lord's inner feelings as he let Our Lord speak in His own words? The terrible indictment of the Pharisees, part of which we have just read, ends almost in a cry and sob of pity: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which

are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate !”

Was there really any need for St Matthew to add that Our Lord was full of anger and sorrow when He said this ? Do we not read in St Luke that some days later Our Lord, seeing the city, wept over it, and spoke words which are almost an echo of the words given in St Matthew ? St Luke is supposed to have written about the same time as the first Gospel, but he did not think that his readers would be shocked at hearing that Jesus wept over this city ; why should the author of the first Gospel ? St John—it is admitted on all hands—wrote long after, perhaps twenty years after the first Gospel, and he records that Our Lord burst out crying at the tomb of his friend Lazarus, but St John evidently had no idea that he might be shocking his readers by thus displaying Our Lord’s human emotions, but the author of the first Gospel was so abnormally cautious that he carefully suppressed all such phrases in St Mark !

St Mark makes Our Lord ask questions which St Matthew omits. But surely, has Matthew not as many questions as Mark ? These are, however, mere historical questions, you say, and do not imply ignorance on the part of the questioner. But do those in St Mark, omitted in St Matthew, imply ignorance ?

Does anyone, did anyone ever, think that when Our Lord asked the unclean devil possessing a man “What is thy name ?” He asked because He didn’t know ? Does anyone, did anyone ever, think that when Our Lord asked the woman with an issue of blood, who touched the hem of His garment and at

once was healed by the power gone out from Him, "Who touched me?" He asked because He didn't know? Or when He said, "Why does this generation ask a sign," He asked because He could not imagine why they should? Or when He asked, "How many loaves have ye?" previous to multiplying them so as to feed 5000 men, He really needed the information before working this stupendous miracle? Or when He descended from Mount Tabor, where He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments were whiter than snow, where the voice was heard, "This is my dearly beloved Son," and Moses spoke to Him and Elias, when He foretold His own death, and the manner thereof, He asked the disturbed crowd at the foot of the mountain, "What is this discussion amongst you?"

And now we are supposed to believe that St Matthew omitted this question on purpose, lest a reader might possibly think that Our Lord was ignorant what the excitement was all about. And St Matthew also omits Our Lord's question to the father of the boy, "How long has he been suffering in this way?" and the father's answer and the father's cry, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," and all the circumstantial description of the boy's illness by the father, and Our Lord's exorcism of the devil, and what precisely happened to the boy afterwards—all told in the lengthy way in which St Mark tells a story. And St Matthew thus shortens the account by two-thirds and gains room for recording Our Lord's teaching, but we are supposed to believe that the author of the first Gospel had all the time a hidden motive in suppressing the two questions,

because he did not think it quite the thing that Our Lord should have asked questions!

Then it is said that Matthew makes alterations in favour of the Apostles, omitting or modifying what seems to their discredit, thus representing a later development of thought, and greater respect for the leaders of Christianity. If the first Gospel really meant to shield the Apostles somewhat, why does it insert Our Lord's words to Peter: "Away! Behind Me, Satan, you are a scandal to Me. You mind the things not of God but of men!" They are the harshest rebuke Peter ever received. Matthew might have omitted it out of respect for Peter's standing and good name, and St Luke, as a matter of fact, omits it.

St Matthew alone tells the story of Peter's fear when walking on the waters and Our Lord's rebuke: "O thou of little faith, why hast thou doubted?" When the Apostles ask the explanation of Our Lord's saying that nothing from without can defile a man, He rebuked them, saying: "Are you also without understanding?" St Matthew does not trouble to hide their slowness in grasping divine teaching. Does St Matthew omit Our Lord's deep dissatisfaction with, and rebuke of His disciples, who "questioned about the leaven of the Pharisees"? Does not St Matthew record that Our Lord said to the disciples asking why they could not cast out the devil from the demoniac boy: "Because of your unbelief"? St Mark omits this. Does not St Matthew record the mean murmur at Mary Magdalene's pouring out of costly ointment on Our Lord's head previous to His Passion: "Why this waste? It could have been sold for thirty shillings and given

to the poor" ? and St Matthew ascribes this saying to the disciples of Our Lord. St Mark says more vaguely: "Some people said." Does not St Matthew say distinctly that St Peter cut off Malchus's ear, and was rebuked by Our Lord for it ? ; whereas St Mark says more vaguely somebody did it, and omits Our Lord's rebuke. It would be easy to make out a case for St Mark's having softened down the faults of the disciples rather than St Matthew.

CHAPTER V

ST MATTHEW

IT is urged against the credibility of St Matthew that he tampers with the truth to shield the disciples of Christ. In fact, neither Matthew nor Mark betrays the slightest desire to whitewash the Apostles—both Evangelists evidently stand before us in all their rugged simplicity, their faults and frailties, their dullness of understanding, their slowness of belief, their little quarrels and envies, their cowardly desertion of their Master in His hour of trial. Some folk have no sense of humour, some commentators have no sense for homely realities. Let us take an example. Every one knows the incident of the two sons of Zebedee coming to Our Lord and asking that they might sit on His right hand and on His left in the Kingdom. Now St Matthew tells it this way: “Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping Him and desiring something of Him. And He said unto her: What wilt thou? She said unto Him: Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left in Thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said: Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He

saith unto them : Ye shall drink indeed of My cup and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with ; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared by My Father. And when the ten heard of it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren."

Now, St Mark's story is identical, but for the opening sentence, which runs thus : "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them : What would ye that I should do for you?" etc. Now, our modern critics see in this another instance of Matthew attempting to gloss over the sinful ambition of the two Apostles. He put the blame on the mother, you see, and that didn't look so bad ! In his innocence Matthew forgot, of course, that in the story Our Lord Himself and the ten Apostles put the blame, not on the mother, but on her two sons. Our Lord at once addresses the sons : "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able," etc., and they answered, "We are," and He said : "Ye shall drink." And the ten, when they heard of it, were angry with the two brethren.

Now, I venture to say that the real reason was obviously this. St Mark published his copy of St Peter's *Catechesis* apparently after Peter's death—as the earliest notice of its publication eighteen hundred years ago states, he published it at Rome—where the names of James and John were of course known, but where the mother of the sons of Zebedee was rather an unknown quantity. St Matthew wrote earlier for Palestinian Jews, who still knew Zebedee

the fisherman quite well. When this incident happened, his two sons were still quite young; if St John lived beyond 100 A.D. he could surely not have been more than say eighteen when it happened. The designation "Zebedee's sons" goes back to the time when in Galilee on the shore of the lake they were "seen mending their nets with their father," as the Gospel tells. The designation was used for people to whom Zebedee and his wife were familiar figures, the sons less well known. And as to the mother being the mouthpiece, can anyone really believe that this was the invention of "more developed Christian thought in favour of the dignity of the Apostles"?

Do the two sheepish lads under the wing of their valiant mother cut a more heroic figure than without her? If the incident was not true, who in heaven or earth would have thought of inventing it? Our Lord in His gentle courtesy no doubt first addressed the mother: "What dost thou want?" Now she had told her sons to adopt this little ruse: "Make Him promise first," and so they all three say: "We want Thee to do whatsoever we are going to ask." Our Lord replies—was it with a smile?—"Well, what do you want Me to do for you?" Then I should think it was the mother who really had the boldness to come out with it—as Matthew says: "Do make my two sons first and second in Thy Kingdom!" Whereupon Our Lord, scarcely blaming the mother—for who would be hard on a mother for wishing the best posts for her sons?—speaks to James and John. The other ten were not actually there, "they only heard of it," say SS. Matthew and Mark. How did they come to hear of it? Had the wife of Zebedee

prematurely confided her little scheme to the wife of a neighbour?

All this, no doubt, is a very homely explanation, but human nature was the same in the first century as it is in the twentieth. There are scholars who seem to forget it.

Let me give one more example, because examples are so instructive in showing you the curiously distorted view taken of simple realities. St Matthew, St Mark, and St Luke, all three—and in fact St Matthew twice over—give the account of Our Blessed Lord abolishing divorce and restoring marriage to its original unity. Everyone knows the Jewish practice of Our Lord's time of giving "a bill of divorce," and thereby breaking the marriage bond between a man and his wife. This practice was based on a text in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter xxiv.: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, and he write her a bill of divorce and give it in her hand and send her out of his house; then, when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."

Now the text is perfectly plain and straightforward, barring just one word, about which a great dispute arose. It is the word rendered "uncleanness." The Hebrew word is quite vague there, and stands, *HERVATH*: "Something shameful or foul." Now, what is meant? Moral, or only physical, foulness? What moral foulness? The adulterous woman was to be publicly stoned to death according to the law, and in consequence, could not "go and be another man's wife." Not adultery, therefore, but some

lesser fault. Faults against chastity only, or also other faults, say, wastefulness, spitefulness, neglect, garrulity?

If physical foulness, also, what disease, deformity, or defect justified a bill of divorce? Jewish rabbis were divided into two schools, the strict and the lax. The lax school made this word *Hervath* to mean anything whatever, physical or moral, which rendered the wife repulsive to the husband, and thus it practically came to this, that a man could divorce his wife for any reason he chose. This new rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, had created quite a stir with His new doctrines. Let us try His mettle with this tricky question, thought the Pharisees from Jerusalem: they came tempting him and saying: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife *for any reason?*" They expected, good, easy folk, to be treated to a long explanation of Deuteronomy xxiv. 1-2. To their surprise they are calmly referred to their Bibles, not, indeed, to Deuteronomy, but to the first book of all, the Book of Genesis, to one of its first chapters, to the creation of Adam and Eve:

"Have ye not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and the two shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Disconcerted, they stammer, "But why did Moses command to give a bill of divorce to put her away?"

Christ answered: "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. Now I say

unto you: Whosoever shall put away his wife—never mind the word *HERVATH*—and shall marry another, commits adultery, and whosoever marrieth her who is put away, commits adultery.”

Now St Mark and St Luke tell the story somewhat less vividly. They were not eye-witnesses, and they omit all allusion to the rabbinic dispute about the word in Deuteronomy.

Nothing more natural—St Mark and St Luke did not write for Jews. None but Jews would understand the reference to this discussion in Jewish theological schools. They simply state the Pharisees’ question: Can a man divorce his wife? and Our Lord’s absolute negative answer and reference to God’s creation of male and female. But now, strangely enough, modern scholars turn all this the other way!

Matthew wrote at a later stage of development of Christian thought, they maintain, when it was realized that Christ’s strict rejection of divorce would not work. It was too hard a yoke to put on the shoulders of Christian converts, and hence Matthew played the trick of putting these words: “Except for the reason of adultery” into the words of Christ, for these words are thus to be understood, they say, and they are meant as a real exception to the indissolubility of marriage. What a clumsy blunderer Matthew must have been! He forgot that Christ had just said: “What God hath joined together, let no *man* break asunder,” and then he makes Him say forthwith that *any man*, by committing adultery with a woman, renders the marriage bond rescindable! Matthew, although a Jew writing for Jews, forgot that adultery on the part of the woman in Jewish law was punishable with death, and that dead women

ST MATTHEW

do not marry again. He forgot that by making this exception, Christ only just said what the respectable rabbis themselves said, and that it was rather superfluous to put it in his Gospel, much easier to leave the episode out than to tamper with it. He forgot that he made the Apostles' subsequent exclamations perfectly ludicrous. "If that be the fate of a man—if he can only divorce his wife on account of adultery—better not marry at all!" He forgot that he thereby directly contradicted the second part of Christ's words: "Whosoever marrieth her who is put away, commits adultery." For if a man can *un*marry his wife on account of adultery, to marry such an *un*married person might be any crime under heaven, but could not be ADULTERY.

The climax is reached when some scholars inveigh against Matthew for the very clumsiness of his forgery, totally unconscious that it is their theories which are clumsy. A simple explanation of St Matthew's text, such as the above, or any other Catholic interpretation, for the above is not the only possible one, dispenses with all forgeries and blunders, and leaves St Matthew's the true account of an eyewitness, as Christians ever thought it was.

One more example of St Matthew's supposed iniquities and I have done. It is the incident of the Pharisees being shocked at the Apostles' eating with unwashed hands. The critics say that St Matthew was afraid to give offence to the Jews by admitting that Our Lord really set aside the food laws of the Old Testament. Hence he manipulated the text of St Mark in such a way as to make it appear that Our Lord only defended His Apostles in the case of omitting the washing of hands before meals, which

was a mere rabbinic precaution, but said not a word against the Mosaic law forbidding some foods as unclean. And this is the way St Matthew did it; he makes Our Lord say (v. 11): "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man"; (v. 17): "Whatsoever entereth into the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught, but those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc. These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." Thus he shrewdly manipulated St Mark's text, where we read: "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him; those are they that defile a man: whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him, because it entereth not into the heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught purging all meats. That which cometh out of a man, that defileth a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, etc. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Does St Matthew avoid the impression that the Jewish food laws are touched by Our Lord's remarks?

Surely St Matthew's opening words: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" are against the Mosaic law of clean and unclean meats? For the rest, is not St Matthew's text as sweeping and absolute as that of St Mark?

It would seem so to most men without prejudice,

CHAPTER VI

ST JOHN

FOR forty years modern criticism has laboured to get rid of the two Evangelist eye-witnesses of Our Lord's life, St Matthew and St John. We have already spoken of St Matthew, let us now consider St John. The amount of literature published on the authorship of the fourth Gospel would form a pile of books almost as high as Nelson's Column on Trafalgar Square. No human being can be familiar with all that has been written on the subject, and the man in the street gets the idea that a question about which the learned have written so much must be an open one; a problem so deep that it can never quite be solved, and that, therefore, the last Gospel must be set aside as a witness of doubtful value. We admit that there is practically nothing beyond the possibility of doubt, for the human mind is so frail and so perverse that it can doubt almost anything if it wants to, inclusive of the existence of a real world, or even the existence of self. But there are things about which no *reasonable* doubt can be entertained, and among such things is the fact that John, the son of Zebedee, wrote the fourth Gospel; and not even a library of books written against it can make the doubt really reasonable. It is not a question of secret or esoteric learning, it is a point of evidence

about which even a jury of plain men ought to be able to judge.

Let us see. Catholics say it was written by John, the disciple of Jesus, at Ephesus about 100 A.D. They adduce as first proof that some seventy years later throughout the whole of the Church the Johannine authorship is asserted without a tremor of doubt. They adduce witnesses from Carthage in Africa, from Lyons in France, from Rome, the centre of the world, from Alexandria in Egypt, from Antioch in Syria, and even from Asia and the environs of Ephesus itself. The witnesses, they adduce, are leading lights in the Christian community, men of standing, a lawyer, a writer, a bishop, a compiler of a list of Scripture books, the author of an apologetic treatise in favour of Christianity. All these simply state as a matter of fact, apparently universally known and undisputed, that John wrote this Gospel. There is not a discordant voice to be found, except that of some weird heretics, whose pet aversion was Montanism, an opposite heresy, and who, rejecting the Godhead of the Holy Ghost and the Divinity of the Word, said that the Gospel must be not by John, but by John's contemporary and arch-enemy, Cerinthus. They claim no special information, but in their extravagant hatred of Montanism, which appealed to this Gospel, they say it is not by an Apostle of Christ, but by the most notorious heretic of earliest Christianity, whom John combated. No matter who wrote the fourth Gospel, this statement is so madly extravagant, that it is utterly worthless. It was the utterance of passion not reason. As a matter of fact most scholars would admit this universal acceptance of the fourth Gospel as Johannine by the last quarter

of the second century, but they contend that it is wrong. They say that even in those early days people were mistaken, John did not write it.

Now let us put this in modern language. Supposing we bring undisputed evidence that a certain book, written about 1850, is held to be written by a certain professor at Oxford, and this conviction is common at Paris, Berlin, Rome and Vienna, and in England itself. We bring indisputable witnesses to prove it, and this book is not a rare sort of volume, but a short handbook in daily use throughout Europe, a book of immense importance to those who use it; and, furthermore, its importance is closely bound up with the very fact that this particular reputed author really wrote it, for it happens to be a short biography of an intimate friend of his.

But there arrive on the scene a number of students saying: "We do not deny this common conviction, but it is all a mistake, or rather it may be a mistake; it is not quite certain." "Indeed," we reply, "do not you admit that it was first published at Oxford about 1850?" "Yes, we do, it was published at Oxford somewhere about that time, but not by the author you think it was, but by someone else who was not a friend of the hero of the story or an eye-witness of what he relates, someone else who had the same name as your reputed author." "Oh, indeed! but the book obviously claims to be by an eye-witness and an intimate friend!" "Yes, it does, but this is only a literary make-believe; you know, the author puts in those minute little touches to make it more readable and vivid." "But what makes you think that the universally accepted author did not really write it? Don't you believe he lived and taught at Oxford?"

54 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

“Well, he may have, perhaps.” “May have? I have absolute proof that he did.”

Now, gentle reader, we leave the parable and go back to reality. John, the son of Zebedee, DID live and teach at Ephesus, we can prove it, prove it even by testimony apart from that proving his authorship. Clement, of Alexandria, born some forty years after John's death, at Athens indeed, but a great traveller, and for some years a priest in Asia Minor, the author of many extant books, tells us this story: John, the Apostle, returning from the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus after the death of the Emperor Domitian (96 A.D.) visited the neighbouring churches. In one of these a young man of attractive mien and chaste looks pleased him very much and he recommended him to the bishop of the place. However, the youth, though instructed and made a Christian, fell away and joined a gang of robbers. No sooner had John, on his return to Ephesus, heard this, than he himself goes to the robbers' cave, but the youth seeing him coming tries to run away. John, however, forgetting his old age, ran after him with all his might and finally brought him back to Christ. Evidently Clement is convinced that John ruled the churches from Ephesus, where he lived in his old age.

Tertullian, a Christian lawyer at Carthage, wrote about 200 A.D. a work against heretics, in which he argues against them, lawyer-wise, that the true Church *is in possession*, and possession is nine-tenths of the law. Heretics only supervene later on and try to oust an already existing Church and to usurp her previous title. Everyone knows when the sects began and it is after the date of the Apostles. In arguing thus against heretics he says: “Let them produce the

origins of their Churches, let them recount the line of their bishops, and show by their uninterrupted successions whether the first amongst them has for guarantee or predecessor one of the Apostles or an apostolic man in touch with the Apostles. In this way apostolic Churches present their title-deeds, thus, for instance, the Church of Smyrna claims Polycarp as established by John." (Smyrna is a neighbouring town to Ephesus.) "Go through the Apostolic Churches, where one sees still in honour the chairs of the Apostles. Can you get to Asia? There you have Ephesus."

Nor do we need to limit ourselves to Catholic witnesses. Even the Gnostics, those weird semi-Christians of the second century, wrote some Pseudo-Acts of John, some time between 160 and 180 A.D., in which they take St John's sojourn at Ephesus for basis. Clearly, if they wanted to pass their "Acts" off at all, they could not set aside the notorious fact that John had been at Patmos and Ephesus.

But we can come close to Ephesus itself. Polycrates was Bishop of Ephesus in 190 A.D. He was then in extreme old age. He boasts of his white hair, he says he has passed sixty-five years in the Lord, an expression most naturally taken to refer to his years since baptism. He boasts that no less than seven of his own relatives have been or are bishops. He himself must have been able personally to remember things happening, say in 135 or 140 A.D.; at least from some of his seven episcopal relations he must have been acquainted with matters religious at Ephesus from the very time of St John's death and before. When he was young there must have been hundreds of his elders who could have known the

son of Zebedee. Now this Polycrates, himself Bishop of Ephesus, writes in an official public letter to the Bishop of Rome that John, who rested on the bosom of Our Lord, was lying buried at Ephesus.

The old man was mistaken you think? It is possible of course, anything is possible, but it is exceedingly improbable. Still, he is not our last witness. Irenæus, himself a native of Asia Minor puts before us a more venerable witness even than Polycrates, I mean Polycarp of Smyrna. This Polycarp Irenæus himself had known and heard and seen, and known so well that his words and gestures had made an indelible impression upon him. In a letter to a friend of his youth he refers to this Polycarp, how he used to talk to his audience; how he used to tell of his familiarity with John and with the others who had seen the Lord (St Philip, the Apostle, also died at Ephesus); how he had received it all from the eye-witnesses of the life of the Word. Irenæus tells us how he heard from the entourage of Polycarp how he used to tell the story, that John, the disciple of the Lord, having come to the baths at Ephesus, and having learned that Cerinthus was within, left forthwith without bathing, saying: "Let us flee for fear lest the house falls down for harbouring Cerinthus, the enemy of truth." Irenæus in a letter to the Pope in c. 190 A.D., reminds him how, thirty-five years before, Polycarp had come to Rome to the then living Pope, Anicetus by name, and maintained the legitimacy of keeping Easter on a week-day because he could not "give up the custom, which he had always observed with John, the disciple of the Lord, and the other Apostles." Now any reasonable man would roundly maintain that to deny

St John's residence at Ephesus in face of this evidence is an insult to common-sense.

The assertions that John died fifty years earlier somewhere in Palestine on the strength of St John's feast following St Stephen's in the present Latin and in some Syriac Calendar, or of a supposed statement of a writer (Philip of Side) about 450 A.D., that Papias (c. 150) wrote that John was killed by the Jews—a statement which Philip himself disregards and which, if it refers to the time of Herod's murder of James, cannot be true, for St Paul met John at least seven years afterwards—all this is mere idle vapouring. We will take it then that St John lived and died at Ephesus. Yet it is maintained that he did not write the fourth Gospel, though the Ephesian origin of the Gospel be not disputed. Can we bring the attestations then to the Johannine authorship still nearer to the date of publication of that Gospel?

Yes, we can, considerably nearer. We have witnesses inside and outside the Church. As outsiders we can bring the Montanist sect, which found support for their doctrines in the Gospel of St John. Now this sect originated about the year 156 A.D.

Furthermore, about the same time, the Gnostics, disciples of the notorious Basilides and Valentinus, exploited St John's Gospel to bolster up their doctrines. Thus, Ptolemy ascribes the prologue of the fourth Gospel to St John the Apostle, St John the disciple of the Lord; thus Heracleon wrote a commentary on this Gospel, stating that it is by John, not the Baptist, but the Disciple. Surely these writers must have inherited this conviction from the founders of their sect themselves, viz., Basilides and Valentinus, and therefore it must have been the com-

mon opinion about 130 A.D. when these heresiarchs first taught. In their childhood St John himself was still among the living.

Now it is inconceivable that the Catholics should have taken over this conviction from their deadliest enemies, who imagined that in it they saw texts favouring their heresy. It is plainly the other way about, the sects that left the Church took this conviction with them as an heirloom of the institution they deserted.

St Justin, born in Palestine about 105, but educated in Ephesus and converted there to Christianity about the year 130 A.D., in his writings when speaking of Our Lord and His doctrines, uses terms and sentences which are direct echoes of the fourth Gospel, so that it is practically impossible to deny that he was steeped in Johannine language and ideas. Now this Justin speaks of the memoirs of the Apostles, written either by Apostles themselves or by men who were their immediate disciples, and he says that he obtained his description of Christ from these memoirs. Writing for heathens he could not well use the word "Gospels," but called them "Memoirs," and who could have been "the Apostles" who wrote them but Matthew and John? and who "their disciples" but Mark and Luke? Especially when we consider that he recalls particulars of Our Lord's life that ARE found in these three Gospels, it seems to me unreasonable wilfulness to say that the other memoir of an Apostle need not have been St John's Gospel, considering that in his description of Our Lord as "the Word" of God he gives us, but in his own words, the first chapter of St John. Then, again, Justin's own disciple, Tatian, wrote a harmony of the FOUR Gospels a few years

afterwards, and these four Gospels are our Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Moreover, St Justin quotes the Apocalypse and distinctly ascribes it to St John the Apostle.

If one thus adds up the testimonies to the Johannean authorship of the fourth Gospel, one marvels that anyone should deny it. Yet there is one more testimony which goes right back to the publication of the Gospel itself. Anyone reading the Gospel notices that it has TWO endings. After the account of Our Lord's appearance to Thomas, at the close of chapter 20, we read :

"Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God : and that believing you may have life in His name." After this, however, we get a sort of appendix, as it were an afterthought, telling of Our Lord's appearance to the seven who went a-fishing on the lake of Tiberias and His conversation with Peter and "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The obvious purpose is to correct a certain mistaken notion amongst the early Christians that that disciple would NOT DIE. The whole story is circumstantially told to bring out that Our Lord did not say he would not die, but simply rebuked Peter's curiosity with the words : "Thus I want him to remain till I come, what is that to you?" Moreover, this appendix is clearly written after St Peter's death in 67 A.D., for Our Lord's prophecy about St Peter's later life is actually explained as referring to his death : "This He (Our Lord) said, signifying by what death he should glorify God." "When thou shalt be old," had Our Lord said to Peter. Well,

Peter had grown old and in old age been crucified like his Master, but the other "disciple, whom Jesus loved and who leaned on His breast at supper" was still surviving and himself had reached extreme old age, and now, through a misunderstanding of Christ's words it is whispered that this disciple will never die, but this disciple corrects the wrong idea, by narrating what precisely Our Lord had said. It is, of course, possible that St John himself did not write these words, but someone else of the seven who were present on that early morning on the lake of Tiberias. It could not have been St Peter, for he was dead. So was St James, the elder of the sons of Zebedee. It is practically impossible that it was St Thomas, who died in far away India. Conceivably it was Nathanael or one of the two others of Christ's disciples, should one of them have survived so long and been living at Ephesus and heard about this misunderstanding. Possibly the elders at Ephesus wrote it after St John's death. But St John is not supposed to be dead, and it is infinitely more probable that St John wrote it himself.

Now, however, look at the last two verses of the whole Gospel: "This is that disciple, who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are, also, many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written."

The disciple who giveth testimony is of course the disciple about whom the saying as to his never dying gained currency, and as the appendix never existed apart from the Gospel, and contains in itself refer-

ences to the Gospel, it is the disciple who wrote the Gospel and whom Jesus loved and who leaned on His breast at supper.

Who wrote this endorsement does not matter, it is as old as the Gospel itself, there is no manuscript, no translation, no allusion existing to the Gospel without it. Hence we have an attestation as old as the Gospel itself that it was written by the disciple who leaned on Our Lord's bosom at the Last Supper. But, you may ask, are you quite certain that was St John?

It was one of the twelve Apostles in any case, as we need but compare the accounts of the Last Supper to be quite certain that only the twelve were lying down at table with Jesus the evening before He died ; and I should think our friends the higher critics do not mind much who precisely among the twelve it was. The eye-witness it is that troubles them, be he Peter, Thomas, John, or any other of Jesus's disciples. Well, let us begin by taking for granted it is not Judas Iscariot. It is also plain that it is not Peter, Andrew, Philip, Thomas or Nathanael, for these are mentioned by their own names in the Gospel itself. It is certainly not James the elder put to death by Herod in the first years of Christianity. He could not have written this Gospel. Thus we have ruled out seven Apostles straightway. Now the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had such marks of affection of Jesus the evening before He suffered, the disciple who stood underneath the Cross and to whom Jesus committed His mother on Calvary, must have been some prominent disciple. This anonymous disciple was a great friend of St Peter. He and Andrew were the first called, and Andrew had fetched his brother Peter. He and Peter had run to the empty

sepulchre on Easter morn together ; though he could run faster than Peter, and arrived before him, he had waited for the coming of his more slow-footed friend. He had indeed peeped into the tomb but remained at the entrance to go in together with Peter. These two seem to have been inseparables. John had managed to get Peter into the court of Caiaphas, the high priest, on Thursday night and the first miracle wrought by the Apostles after Pentecost Day was performed when Peter and John were going together to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray.

Now, if you will look up Matthew, Mark and Luke you will find that Peter, James and John are always found together ; they have the privilege to see Christ transfigured on the Mount, they alone are allowed in the room when the little daughter of Jairus is raised from the dead. If, then, the anonymous disciple is not James, as we know, who can he be but the other son of Zebedee, John ? This would account, naturally for the only time the sons of Zebedee are referred to by St John, that is in the appendix itself. He could not very well associate the name of his martyred brother with his own in this way, "the disciple whom Jesus loved and James," so for once he directly reveals his identity by saying, "the sons of Zebedee.

If we add to all this that the whole Christian community unfailingly asserted that John the disciple who stood under the Cross, to whom Mary was committed, who lived till old age at Ephesus, wrote the fourth Gospel, it does seem far-fetched and perverse to maintain that he did not. The more so as the fourth Gospel itself bears unmistakable marks of being written by an eye-witness. But of this more in another chapter,

CHAPTER VII

ST JOHN

WE saw that the attestation to the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel is as good as any of the classics, the authorship of which no scholar would dream of disputing.

But, it may be argued, external testimony must give way to arguments based on internal examinations of the Gospel itself. The fourth Gospel simply cannot have been written by an eye-witness. Read it. To its author, Jesus of Nazareth is a super-human, celestial kind of being—the Word of God, made Flesh—someone who is for ever asserting His mystical unity with God the Father Himself, someone who is always speaking mysterious theology concerning the metaphysical relations of Himself to the Godhead. The author of the fourth Gospel clearly thought of his hero as a veritable deity walking about in human guise, uttering oracular wisdom and throwing out hints on the deepest problems of theology. He and the Father are one, and there is a third, a Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, whom He and the Father are to send from heaven. Now, it is against common-sense to say that a real contemporary, a real eye-witness, should talk of a former companion, however venerated, as if He were veritably *God Him-*

self. It is later speculation, it is sublime legend, it is a divine halo cast round the Prophet of Nazareth by someone who was far enough from the real events to indulge in such religious dreams. It is a theological treatise, it is not a biography.

Besides, Jesus of Nazareth, in St John, talks in quite a different way from the Jesus of the three Synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke. If their portrait is correct, John's portrait is untrue. He who spoke as Our Lord speaks in St Matthew, never could say the things St John makes Him say.

Now, if, in reality, this objection only means that the assertion of Christ's Divinity in the Gospel of St John is so plain that, even the most unwilling mind must acknowledge it, and, that therefore, having made up one's mind, that Christ was only human, the Gospel of St John must go, then we can only answer that, as historians, we have no such *a priori* principles, we simply record what *has* taken place; not what we think OUGHT to have happened. As critical scholars we must apply to this document the same rules as to other documents of the same age. If the contents of a certain document clash with some dogmatic prejudices, some *a priori* theories of our own, and we really reject it on these grounds, let us be honest enough to say so and not allege a verdict of modern scholarship against the genuineness of the fourth Gospel.

If this objection means that, speaking merely as literary scholars, the Christ of Matthew, Mark and Luke could not have said what is put on His lips by John, we are asserting what we cannot prove.

St John puts on Our Lord's lips about 8000 words, or as many as in the first three chapters of this book,

SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke about three times as many.

To speak slowly and distinctly, all the words of Our Lord recorded in St John would take less than one hour, the words given in the Synoptics about two hours and a half. Now, the Gospels give us to understand that during His Public Ministry Our Lord spoke practically, day by day, for many hours. If Our Lord spoke only one hour a day in public, His public speeches would occupy say one thousand hours, but Our Lord did not merely speak in public, He spoke continually in private to His disciples. His longest recorded address in St John, xiii.-xvii., was spoken entirely in private to His disciples. Considering that, apparently, Christ devoted all His time to speaking and teaching, somehow, His twelve Apostles must have heard Him for thousands of hours, and what is contained in the three Synoptics is in consequence not one-thousandth part of what they heard Him say. Is it not, therefore, a rash and unprovable assertion to maintain that He who said the words in the Synoptics could not also have said what St John reports? Perhaps, it may be objected, that it is not a question of arithmetic, it is a question of spirit and style. Quite so, but is the spirit and style of Jesus of Nazareth in the Synoptics such a well-known literary quantity that it excludes the possibility of His having uttered the Johannine sentences? In any case we have only Greek translations, not Our Lord's original Aramaic. Are arguments of style drawn from translations, not a little weak?

It must be admitted that it is not a question of style really, it is a question of what He said; not how He said it.

66 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

They maintain that Our Lord makes claims, in St John, He does not make in the three other Evangelists.

But does He? The one unmistakable Trinitarian text occurs in St Matthew: "Baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," *not* in St John, and does anyone doubt that *the Son* in this text is meant to refer to Christ?

It is true people say this text is not genuine. But is not this a mere frivolity? There is no text, no version not containing it, there is no hint whatever, in ancient writers, that there even was a Gospel without it. The text is as well accredited as any text of St Matthew whatsoever: why then must it be rejected? Because Christ cannot have said such a thing! There are four biographies of Christ. One is ruled out, because it disagrees with the three others in making direct divine claims for Christ, which the three do not make. And then, when a passage is pointed out in those three which makes the most absolute divine claim of all, it is said: "Oh, that cannot be genuine, because Christ could not have said such a thing!" As someone gives the text Matthew xi. 27 (Luke x. 20): "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," and asks whether this is not sufficiently in the style of John, it is answered: "that text must have lost its way from Johannine circles into the Synoptics." This is arguing in a vicious circle.

In St Mark, St Matthew and St Luke we read the parable of the wicked husbandmen and of the master

of the vineyard, who, having sent many *servants* whom they beat or killed, at last said: Having yet, therefore, one *son*, his well-beloved, he sent him finally unto them, saying, they will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said, amongst themselves: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours." Does not Christ here claim sonship in an absolute unique sense? Not in the sense in which Moses or Elias or Isaias, the prophets, were sons—they were only *servants*—He is the *Son* of God; and could He, who spoke that parable, not have spoken the words in St John?

According to the first three Evangelists, Christ was transfigured before His Apostles. His face shone like the sun, His garments became white as snow, and Moses and Elias appeared speaking with Him, and the voice came from heaven: "This is My dearly beloved Son, hear ye Him." Could not He who was thus glorified, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, have said the words attributed to Him in St John?

According to the Synoptics, did Jesus not claim to be the Judge of the human race at the last day, as He claims it in St John?

Does Jesus, according to the first three, not die for supposed blasphemy, that is because He made Himself equal to God, even as according to St John?

Merely to claim to be the Messiah, the Jews might have considered presumption, but no Jew would ever have called it blasphemy.

Is it Matthew or John who tells us that Mary the Virgin conceived by the Holy Ghost and that her Son should be called Emmanuel, that is God with us?

Is it Luke or John who relates that an Angel of God brought the message to Mary: "the holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"?

Is it Matthew or John who says that even the centurion on Calvary, when he saw the earthquake, exclaimed: "Truly this was the Son of God"?

Can it be said—or rather can it be proven—that the fourth Evangelist thought more of the hero of his story than the first three did of theirs?

The fourth Gospel must be very late because, it is said, it idealizes Christ so much; but is Christ in that Gospel more idealized than in the Epistles of St Paul to the Ephesians, or Romans, or Corinthians, or the First Epistle of St Peter, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, all of which were certainly written before the fourth Gospel was written?

Does the fourth Gospel say more than the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Yet no one, at least no scholar, would attempt to deny that that Epistle was written within the lifetime of the people who had known Jesus in the flesh.

If the above letters could have been written between 60 and 70 A.D., why could not the son of Zebedee write his Gospel about twenty-five years later?

Yes! but Christ could not really have spoken in this way! But how do you know? Are contemporaries not better judges as to what He really did say than you are? Is there anything in St John which contradicts or which is, in any sense, incompatible with a statement made by Christ in the other Evangelists? No, you answer, but Christ, in St John, uses set words and terms which He does not

in the other three, as, for instance, the antithesis: Life—death, light—darkness, His being sent by the Father, His bringing grace and truth, and so on. This, we allow, is quite true, but it is amply explained, by the simple explanation, that St John wrote after the other three. He knew Matthew, Mark and Luke and, even as he does not repeat their series of miracles (for, in fact, he gives only one miracle that occurs in the Synoptics, the feeding of the five thousand), he purposely does not repeat Christ's parables and sayings, as recorded by the Synoptics. If St John had only to give, as it were, a continuation of the previous three writers, his work would have missed its aim. He took, from the vast material of Christ's saying and doings, which he had heard and witnessed, other matter to illustrate the points he wished to make. Matthew wrote to prove that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews, the New Teacher and Law-giver, greater than Moses, clearly writing to convert the Jews; Mark thought of Christ as the great Wonder-worker. His Gospel is the Gospel of the Miracles; some people are most influenced by the miraculous. Mark teaches Christ was Master of this universe: the proof of His divinity. Luke wrote to show that Jesus was not sent for the Jews alone, but had a universal message for the whole of mankind. Whereas people, reading St Matthew, might not sufficiently realize the universality of the Message of Jesus, not only as Messiah of the Jews, but as loving Saviour of the whole human race, Luke himself, no doubt a Gentile, took from Jesus's sayings what would appeal to him as a convert from heathenism. St John took from the same endless store of Christ's sayings those he needed. His

Gospel has one deliberate purpose: to show what Christ Himself said about His relationship to God the Father. True, the Jews rejected Christ as their Messiah, but be not mistaken, says St John, the rejection went deeper than a mere denial of Messiahship. They condemned Him because, in their eyes, He blasphemed. Before Pilate they cried: "We have a law and according to that law He has to die because He made Himself the Son of God."

We know how the Gnostics distinguished between a Son of God, a sort of Æon or Emanation of the Supreme Deity, a Word, a Truth flowing from the Depth of the All-Father, but this Æon was *not* the Man Christ Jesus. John wrote to show that Christ *is* the Son of God. These are not two but one. John searched his memory for words of Christ, which made this clear. To repeat what everyone knew from the other Gospels would have been an idle performance. What wonder that we find in the fourth Gospel many sayings of Christ which bring out His own personal relation to the Father; that is what the Gospel was written for!

The Father did not, as Gnostics dreamt, send down some merely immaterial Emanation of the Deity, but the Father sent the Man, who lived in Palestine and died on the Cross. The Father sent ME, says Christ in St John.

If this be the true account of the origin of the fourth Gospel, and it is the only one that has any footing in history, why labour the point that Christ, in St John, says things other than He says in the other three?

If any one could prove that the Johannine account

was incompatible with the Synoptic one, that would be an argument, but who has ever done so?

That Christ, while upon earth, spoke as St John makes Him speak, and let His disciples into some of the secrets of His own Personality, is demanded by the very language of early Christianity used about Him.

"And if our Gospel be a hidden one," so wrote an early teacher of Christianity about 58 A.D., "it is hidden only amongst those who are being lost, amongst whom the god of this world did blind the minds of unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine upon them. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shone in our hearts unto the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 3-6).

"God hath spoken to us by a Son, whom He hath appointed heir to all things, by whom also He made the world, who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and the upholder of all things by the word of His power . . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 2-3).

"Christ Jesus . . . being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6-7).

"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin . . . that the justice of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk . . . after the spirit. God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 3-4, 32).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love

of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

"Peter . . . to the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience . . . of Jesus Christ. Ye know ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the blood of Christ, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter i. 2-31, 18-22).

Now where did these early Christians—for all these things were written a quarter of a century before the fourth Gospel was written—where did they get all these ideas from? Christ was the Son, the image of God the Father, He was in the form of God, but took flesh. He, with the Father and the Spirit, are the authors of our spiritual life. Whence came their knowledge, if Christ never said the things reported in St John, and if the command to baptize, in the three-fold Name, is only a late addition to St Matthew, which Christ never said? They got it from St Paul, so moderns say.

But do they, then, allow that Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Hebrews were written by St Paul? Was Peter's First Epistle written by St Paul? Was John's First Epistle, or was the Apocalypse written by St Paul? If they must needs make St Paul the inventor of the Johannine Christ, how do they account for the fact that the doctrine of salvation, by faith and grace, of Christ as Atoner and Redeemer, the burden of St Paul's message, is not emphasized in the fourth Gospel?

If there be dissimilarity of outlook between the first Evangelists and St John, there is certainly greater dissimilarity between the Pauline and the Johannine outlook on Christianity, yet Paul is supposed to be responsible for the Johannine Christ! Oh, strange perversity of mind which will accept everything and anything except the simple statement of tradition, which is the obvious key to the understanding of the New Testament; viz., that Christ really said and did the things reported by St John. We hope to show from the intrinsic evidence from the fourth Gospel itself that it was written by a Palestinian Jew, who was an intimate follower of Jesus of Nazareth, who can have been none other than the son of Zebedee.

CHAPTER VIII

ST JOHN

WE have advanced two stages in considering the so-called problem of St John. First, we gave the external attestation to the Johannine authorship in the second century, and we saw that the witnesses were so many, so close to the events, so reliable in themselves, that naught but unreasoning prejudice could reject their testimony. If such testimony existed for any other work of that period, no one would doubt it. Then we faced the objection raised on internal grounds. True, they say, the external testimony for John's authorship is considerable, still it **MUST** be set aside: the son of Zebedee **CANNOT** have written it. It is legend, myth, speculation, meditation, anything but reality. The son of Zebedee had known Jesus of Nazareth intimately, he could not have written a biography which describes Him as a supernatural and divine Being, a God conversing with men, as the fourth Gospel does. We trust we have effectively shown the weakness of this *a priori* objection, which tries to override the verdict of history. We shall now, ourselves, have recourse to internal arguments, reasons drawn from the very text of the Gospel itself to show that our second-century witnesses said well that John had written his Gospel. The author of the fourth Gospel was certainly a **JEW**.

His native tongue was obviously not Greek, but Hebrew or Aramaic. The Gospel is all written in Greek words, of course, and one could not point out a positive blunder, but the thing is none the less unmistakable. Not only is the author fond of putting Hebrew words in his book, such as Rabbi, Messias, Cephas, Bethsaida, Siloe, Gabbatha, Golgotha, Rabboni, and giving the Greek equivalent, but his language is really only Aramaic disguised. It would be difficult to find two languages more unlike one another in structure and phraseology than Aramaic and Greek. The Greek loves long periods and abstract terms, the Aramaic goes on and on with just the use of "and" and "for." There is no "nevertheless," "notwithstanding," "whereas," "perchance," "for as much as," and such like conjunctions on the lips of a Semite. Who has not felt the rugged simplicity and almost bald directness of Bible language? Why? Because it is all translated from Hebrew and Aramaic, and no version can quite hide the genius of a Semitic tongue. Thus one sees the Aramaic thinker using Greek words in the fourth Gospel, but none the less thinking and formulating his thought after the fashion of Semitic peoples, even adding and adding short, easily built sentences connected by no other link than the simple "AND." If the author of the fourth Gospel is not a Jew, he has at least mimicked a Jew to perfection. His thought may be sublime and spiritual, but his words are always simple and concrete: he avoids all technical philosophical terms, whilst the wealth of Greek subjunctives, optatives, conditionals and participles are not for him. If you want a typical Greek sentence take the first four verses of St Luke, and then read on in the fourth

Gospel, and you almost feel that you pass from the Greek world into the Hebrew one.

"Well, be that so," some allow, "the author was not a Greek and perhaps a Jew." No, not perhaps, he certainly was a Jew. No one but a Jew could have betrayed such intimacy with Jewish customs and ideas. He refers naturally to their feasts, to the Pasch, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of the Dedication, which latter he correctly states was held in winter-time. He is familiar with the laws of the Sabbath, circumcision, the custom of washing one's hands before meals, and of not entering pagan houses, the Jewish antipathy to the Samaritans, and so on. He is quite at home with Jewish ideas about the Messias, His origin, His supposed future; the life of Moses and his laws, the Scriptures, the Law, Prophets and the Psalms; he uses the Old Testament as an absolute authority; makes use of Old Testament symbols and texts—the Brazen Serpent, the Manna, the Paschal Lamb and a number of quotations gathered from everywhere. Who but a Jew could, in the year 100 or thereabouts, have given such a perfect picture of Jewish life with such apparent ease and precision?

But he was not merely any Jew, he was a Jew *who had personally known Palestine in the days of Christ*. His Palestine is the Palestine at the beginning of our era. Not that the author ever of set purpose deals with questions of geography or contemporary history, he merely casually refers to such things as a Jew of the period naturally would. When the Gospel was written, Jerusalem had been destroyed, and Palestine devastated some thirty years. The whole Jewish community almost was wiped out. The temple had

gone, all ritual had ceased, the Jewish priesthood was scattered over the whole world, and there remained hardly any priest who had been in office at Jerusalem. The Jewish parties, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, High Priests, Sanhedrin, all were a matter of the past, only a few rabbis eked out a miserable existence at Jamnia or Tiberias. If in 1945 a man who had not known Ypres and West Flanders before 1914 were to write a biography of a Belgian who flourished there thirty years before the war, he would find it no easy task, even with stacks of photos and maps and plans and ancient guide-books and Baedekers. But the imaginary forger at Ephesus in 100 A.D. had none of these things.

He apparently knew Galilee well; knows where Nazareth is, that Simon and Andrew and Philip had Bethsaida for native town; when he mentions Cana he adds "in Galilee," because there happened to be another little Cana in Syria not far off. It is easy enough to know about London, but not many people know of South Mimms or Potters Bar. It was easy enough to talk about Athens, or Rome, or Milan, Smyrna, or Antioch, but would one in ten thousand in Ephesus have heard of Cana, and been able to distinguish it from a similarly insignificant locality twelve miles from Tyre? He is at home on the lake of Gennesaret, he knows Capharnaum and Tiberias on its borders—he knows exactly its width. We know from St Mark and St Matthew that when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the waters, their boat was "in the midst of the sea." Now St John tells the same story, but adds: "When they had rowed about twenty or thirty furlongs," or, in English, close on four miles. Now the Lake of Galilee is practically

eight miles broad, so that they were just about half across as Matthew and Mark indicated. How incredibly clever of the "unknown Ephesian author" to ascertain the measurement of the lake first, then halve it and put it in such a way as to seemingly harmonize with Matthew and Mark—the same Matthew and Mark whom he disregards so plainly on other points! But how natural, if with his father and elder brother he had gained his living by fishing on that lake, and managed an oar himself on the occasion recorded by him. How natural, too, for him to know, and incidentally to refer to, "the mountain," the foot of which formed the shore of the lake on the north-east, before they crossed over to Capharnaum on the north-west, where the shore of the lake is more marshy and flat. How natural, too, for him to portray the crowd on the north-east coast, away from any biggish town, noting that there was only that one single boat on that deserted shore, and that the disciples of Jesus had the night before certainly put off without their Master, and that, therefore, He must still be on this, their own side. Still they cannot find Him, and when quite certain He is no longer in the neighbourhood, they go a few miles south to Tiberias, where they can get boats in plenty, and cross over to Capharnaum; and when they see Jesus they cry out: "Rabbi, how didst Thou get here?"

Note, too, that John alone speaks of the Sea of *Tiberias*, St Luke calls it the *Lake of Gennesaret*, St Matthew and St Luke, the Sea of *Galilee*. Why do not the first two Evangelists call it the Sea of Tiberias? Because Tiberias was a mushroom town, a sort of Garden City, built by Herod Antipas, and

less than ten years old when Our Lord was in the neighbourhood. It took some time before this brand-new city gave its name to the whole lake, but it leapt into prominence after the fall of Jerusalem, when the Roman Government allowed the Jews to reside there, and make it a sort of centre of Jewry. By the beginning of the second century the new name had practically everywhere won its way, and St John employs it, but notice that St John also uses the older name, Sea of Galilee, and then as it were explains himself, and adds, "which is that of Tiberias," because he lived before the new name was firmly established, and when he was a fishing lad they called it the Sea of Galilee.

Notice, too, not *Lake*, as St Luke, a much-travelled Greek, naturally calls a sheet of water eight miles by twenty, but a *Sea*, as it was to a Semite and a Jew—BAHR TABARIYEH they still call it to-day. If someone in 1945 should refer to a certain station on the Metropolitan as "Gower Street, I beg your pardon, Euston Square," we would think him an old foggy who lived in London before the war. So we think John a Jew who lived in Galilee before the Great War of 70. A trifle you think? a mere straw? Yes, but when a great quantity of straw proceeds somewhat over swiftly in one direction, we may guess which way the wind blows.

John knows Samaria; he knows that on the route from Judea to Galilee one passes the Well of Jacob, close to Sychar, the present village Askar, at the distance of about two-thirds of a mile, where you have a fine view of the surrounding fields. From this commanding position the woman at the well could, with a gesture, point to Mount Garizim, where

the Samaritans had their temple and designate it as "this mountain," as she stood at the foot of it, though she does not actually name it. Even the unbeliever Renan said: "Only a Jew of Palestine, who often passed the entry to the valley of Sichem, could possibly have written that!"

John seems to know the country beyond the Jordan well. The Baptist's second testimony is put at Ainon close to Salim, where there is enough water to baptize the crowds that came to him. After the excitement caused by the raising of Lazarus, Christ retires to Ephrem. There are two Bethanies, one beyond the Jordan, where the Baptist first preached, the other fifteen stadia from Jerusalem as the Gospel correctly states. His knowledge of Jerusalem is remarkable. He knows the two pools of Siloe and Bethesda, and that the pool of Siloe is nearest to the temple, for Our Lord sends the blind beggar there, whom He found in its neighbourhood. John naturally uses the phrase to go up, or climb up, to the temple, a natural expression for those who knew the dominating position of the temple mount. He knows that in bad weather Solomon's Porch was used as a vast lounge, where a teacher could address his followers. He makes Our Lord at the Feast of the Dedication speak in a hall of the Temple called "the Treasury." He refers with precision to the Brook of Kedron, separating the city from the Garden of Christ's arrest, although he does not give its name, Gethsemane. He knows that the place of the Crucifixion was just outside the town, close to a garden. He knows that the Procurator of Judea, during his stay at Jerusalem, lived at the Prætorium, a heathen building which the Jews would not enter; that the Procurator gave judgment from

a sort of dais, or elevated place, Gabbatha, with a mosaic pavement (lithostrotos).

Not only does the fourth Gospel abound in matters of geography and topography which can be tested and found correct, but its author is at home among the Jews in Palestine 1900 years ago. His Jews talk as Jews then would naturally talk. It is true the Gospel begins with an introduction of super-human sublimity, a chapter of deepest theological speculation, based on Jewish contemporary thought about the MEMRA or DEBHIRAH, *i.e.*, The Word of God who is God, and yet an utterance of God, and the author uses a Greek term LOGOS, which was used by Philo the Jew: but do not forget that the moment the author lets Christ and His contemporaries speak, all philosophical phraseology is at once set aside and never again resumed. The Jews, whom he introduces very frequently, speak just as common folk, and Christ in speaking to them does not use technical terms, but just simple, concrete language, though the underlying thought be divine.

As a sample of the minute touches which betray how true his descriptions are to reality, take this: he speaks of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, when the people lived in booths of fresh foliage for a week, and he is acquainted with such a small detail that the last day of the Octave was "the great day of the feast." On that day he puts into the mouth of Jesus a long discourse which contains allusions to the main ceremonies of that feast—spectacular ceremonies, not indeed commanded in the law, but introduced by custom, the solemn bringing of water from the Pool of Siloe in silver basins, and their solemn pouring out and the sprinkling of the altar with the water, and the

torchlight illumination within the precincts of the Temple. There stood Jesus crying out : " If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, from him shall flow rivers of living water." Could anyone mistake the allusion? But could anyone have put it into the mouth of Jesus on that particular occasion by mere chance? Or, if it was done on purpose, would the writer have failed to draw attention to it? Or, again, take John's story of the Passion. He makes the crowd cry out to Pilate : " If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Now, as a matter of fact, Pilate was not Cæsar's friend, and the crowd knew it, and therefore they said it. On the complaint of influential Jews the Emperor himself had interfered in Pilate's administration, and Pilate must have dreaded a second rebuke from the Roman Government. This is the key to Pilate's character as described by St John. The Evangelist chanced to mention Annas in the Passion story : he alone does so. This Annas had ceased to be acting High Priest for over fifteen years, but he had seen his five sons succeed him in this office, and now a son-in-law. What wonder that the old man was the moving spirit, and that Christ was first brought before him, especially if he still remained President of the Sanhedrin, though a son, or son-in-law, were titular High Priest? Would a second-century forger at Ephesus have put him in the story?

The author of the fourth Gospel is an eye-witness of what he relates. Have you ever studied the way in which a person tells a story of what he himself has seen? He will put in little details, not because they matter really—in fact sometimes they rather impede

his narrative — not because they are deliberately chosen to make the story more vivid, but merely because the narrator himself visualizes the past, and repeats the items as they surge up in his memory. Now, read the fourth Gospel. The author gives minute details, which obviously only the inner circle of Christ's friends could know. He gives apparently useless information, *e.g.* "now the next day," "now three days after," "at the tenth hour," "at the sixth hour." He mentions names unimportant to the narrative — Philip, Andrew, Thomas, Judas *not* Iscariot, Malchus. Read the story of the woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind, of Lazarus and his two sisters. Read it straight through, just as a story, not as a series of Scripture texts, and ask yourself have you ever read anything more limpidly clear, more obviously unstudied, and yet creating the impression that the person who wrote it was there himself, and part and parcel of the incident narrated? Each story is like a costly cameo. The last Gospel is the most realistic of the four. But though the author states that he is an eye-witness, yet he does not advance it as a claim to be laboriously proved or emphasized; he does not go out of his way to remind you of it.

So great is the almost irresistible impression that we are listening to an eye-witness that many non-Catholic scholars to-day dare not straightway speak of a forgery. They either make the author a dreamer embodying his theological prepossessions in parable-stories, or they say he is a compiler, making a patch-work of some real Johannine material and some added reflections of his own. Now this dreamer-hypothesis will not work. The Gospel is cram-full of tiny, quaint details, which either go back to historic reality, or are

84 CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

sand deliberately thrown in your eyes. Take the driving out of the money-changers from the Temple. First of all, the incident is put at the beginning of Our Lord's public life: the Synoptics seem to put it at the end, on the occasion of the last visit of Christ to Jerusalem, not the first. Why this needless apparent discrepancy? Very simple if the son of Zebedee wrote it. Synoptics do not distinguish visits at all: John does. And secondly, the crowd in the Temple said to Christ: "*Forty-six* years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days?" A perfectly natural thing to put in if the Jews said so, but a weird thing to invent if they did not. Some critics have actually imagined some cryptic reason for the mysterious number 46, all based on manipulation of texts in Daniel, or a hidden allusion to Our Lord's real age. And this for the sole purpose of not admitting the simple truth that it *was* forty-six years since the Herodian Temple was first begun, and it was an obvious thing for the crowd to say. The Temple reconstruction was begun 19 B.C., and was not completed till 64 A.D., only seven years before it was finally destroyed. Our Lord's contemporaries had seen the building operations proceed during the whole of their lifetime, so slowly arose this new wonder of the world. When it was finally finished, 18,000 workmen were thrown out of work. It seems that during Our Lord's public life there were always enough bricks or chips of marble or broken stones lying about in the Temple precincts, for they no less than three times threatened to stone Him there, and were never in trouble for lack of material. As Herod began the Temple in 19 B.C. it was forty-six years since its commencement in 26 or 27 A.D., making allowance for the

mistake in our era. This would fit in excellently with the beginning of Our Lord's public life. Now, is it likely that someone, between 100 and 120 A.D., first ascertained that Herod began building in the eighteenth year of his reign, then worked the sum to arrive at the date of the incident, only just to make his parable-story more vivid? Many things are possible, not so many are probable.

The patchwork-hypothesis will not work. If at the beginning some Christian wanted to compile a new biography, that is certainly not the way he would have set about it. Think! At that time, the three Synoptic Gospels were current throughout Christendom. The author knew them, and knew that his readers knew them. How could he write a biography of Christ without betraying that he knew of Matthew, Mark and Luke? He surely would have attempted to reconcile his story with the story already in so many hands. If he did not, how could he hope that anybody would believe him? He might stealthily, here and there, introduce a pet item of his own, under cover of stuff that sounded like echoes of the three preceding Evangelists. We have apocryphal literature of the second century, and we know how apocrypha were constructed in those days. They are feeble, tedious, verbose, second-rate amplifications of New Testament literature, weird, unpleasant, morbid fancies, so fantastical that they only deserve contempt. Why is the fourth Gospel so utterly unlike them? Why did it succeed? When in that century a priest of Asia Minor tampered with the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, he was degraded from his office and the fact was known in North Africa a thousand miles away. When Bishop Serapion of Antioch, on his

visitation in the parish of Rhossos found the Christians reading a so-called *Gospel of Peter*, it was not long before he fulminated against it. The Gnostic *Acts of John*, written about 160 A.D., were set aside. And yet we are asked to believe that at the beginning of the same century the whole Christian community was taken in by a Gospel purporting to come from the son of Zebedee!

An argument which seems to me of exceptional cogency consists in the very independence of the fourth Gospel from the three others. This independence, first of all, in the very facts selected for the biography. The multiplication of the loaves, and the walking on the waters, and the unction at Bethany, the expulsion of the buyers and sellers from the Temple, are the only items in common with the other Evangelists, all other facts are fresh and new. Then, secondly, even in the narration of these facts, *e.g.*, the story of the Passion, it is perfectly clear that the narrator tells them with complete independence and self-reliance, nowhere resting on the Synoptic text. Thirdly, the biography is so told that it implies at least a three-year ministry of Our Blessed Lord, whereas, if we had only the Synoptics to go by, we might almost have thought Our Lord only taught during one single year. St John never distinctly contradicts the Synoptics, but he certainly creates difficulties enough for the commentator. Notorious is the difficulty about the date of the Crucifixion, which St John seems to put the day before the Jewish Passover, the Synoptics on the Jewish Passover itself. This problem is not yet solved, though it has exercised clever minds for centuries. It seems to go as near as is possible to a contradiction of the Synoptics without

quite being so. Fourthly, it is quite true, that the Christ of St John leaves upon the mind quite a distinct impression from the Christ of the Synoptics. Of course it does not gainsay the Synoptics. It is as if two different painters had painted the same person, but in totally different positions, in a totally different light and surroundings. But both painted Him as they themselves saw Him, and in supreme independence of one another. Fifthly, the author of the fourth Gospel, whoever he was, was a great genius. True or not true, the fourth Gospel is one of the greatest pieces of literature ever written by human pen. This, I believe, all accept. If anyone can read that Gospel and not be spell-bound, he is only to be pitied. The author has been called *the great unknown*. Great he certainly was. Now great men are few. On the supposition that the author is indeed the son of Zebedee, all becomes obvious and natural. He was a fellow-witness of the life of his Master, together with St Matthew and St Peter, whose Gospel St Mark wrote; he was a more direct witness than Luke, who had only gathered together his material from existing sources. The real John could act with the utmost freedom in telling his story, he could write independently of Matthew or Peter or Luke's informants, for he had seen things himself. Why should two eye-witnesses copy from one another? John wrote for a purpose, to prove that Christ, the historical Christ, was Himself the Son of God, and he selected material from Christ's words and deeds to illustrate his contention. He, and he alone, could be careless whether what he said seemed at first glance to tally with what Matthew, Mark or Luke had written. Who else in the years 100-120 could have done so?

Or, having attempted it, could have succeeded? That Christendom accepted the fourth Gospel when the first three were already in currency, proves the commanding position of its author.

To sum up : We take it as admitted that the fourth Gospel had its origin at Ephesus, between the years 100 and 120 A.D. The independent evidence that the son of Zebedee lived and died at Ephesus is so great that there is only the wildest historical improbability that he did not. A Gospel, claiming to be by an eye-witness was in currency throughout the whole of Christendom by 160 A.D., and was attributed to John, the son of Zebedee. Even the most unwilling critics admit that portions of this Gospel are obviously by an eye-witness. Why, in the name of reason, invent another author to compile notes of an earlier John? We can, of course, with Weizsacker, say that it is impossible that anyone who had himself known the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth should have written this portrait of a quasi-divine Being given in the fourth Gospel. But what, then, of Matthew, Mark and Luke? What of Paul and Peter, and the early Christians, who, at the very time of the composition of the second Gospel had been wont to sing hymns to Christ as God? Is not the Christ of Peter and Paul and the Synoptics miraculous enough?

Besides, the whole position is begging the question. If the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth *must* have been just an ordinary human life and nothing more, then the critics *must* be right, but who guarantees this *must*? Suppose it was not so. Suppose there is more in heaven and earth than they have dreamt of in their philosophy. What then? Then we had better leave to John the Gospel he wrote.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE

WHAT think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He? For two thousand years the Catholic Church has had a firm and precise answer to this question, but those who rejected this answer have laboured and toiled to give another without finding one. During four hundred years, from about 300 to 700 A.D., Arians, Nestorians, Monophysites, Monothelites succeed one another. They would not say what Jew and pagan said, Christ was a deceiver or a fool, a mere man like any of us, but the Catholic answer they would not give, they halted between the two. They lost themselves in fancies, dreams, obscurities, contradictions, till at last they abandoned the contest. For many centuries the true Christian answer and the non-Christian denial faced one another in their simplicity. These last two hundred years the attempt at finding some intermediate solution has been renewed. French and German savants especially, with prodigious industry, have worked at the problem. After centuries of Christianity, they would not, nay they could not say that Christ was a mere fool or a knave, hence the nervous endeavour somehow to save the character of Jesus of Nazareth and yet not to acknowledge Him as Son of God.

Roughly speaking, the evolution of opinion was

as follows. First attempt: Jesus sincerely thought Himself the Jewish Messiah in the ordinary Jewish sense. He had high political ideals to better the moral life of the Jews. Though but human He claimed to possess miraculous powers, or at least encouraged the people to believe in His miraculous gifts, and manipulated O.T. prophecies in His favour, but at last He was put down by authority, abandoned by all, and believed Himself abandoned by God. A pitiful figure, noble in a way, half sincere, he ended in disaster. His disciples deliberately perpetrated the fraud of His resurrection and represented Christ's death as a means of deliverance from sin, and thus started Christianity.

A second attempt: Christ was a most enlightened philosopher, in fact the founder of the reign of reason. He is the Unique Master, a sort of Rationalist before His time. He belonged to a Jewish Secret Society, the Essenes, the Freemasons of the first century. He had a most marvellous knowledge of medicine and effected many marvellous cures, which a simple generation thought miraculous. Other so-called miracles of the Gospels were simple rational events exaggerated beyond recognition almost by miracle-mongering disciples. Jesus did not really die on the Cross, though almost so, He still survived for forty days afterwards and then retired to the secrecy of this Essene Monastery again.

A third attempt: adopting more Christian phraseology. The Gospels are myths or the outcome of the pious meditations of some generations of the faithful on the life and death of Christ. We all know of this curious inclination of the crowd to put a halo round the figure of a distant hero. The Gospels were

written some hundred years after Christ's death and present not the Christ of real history but the Christ of faith, the object of worship as conceived by the Early Christians. Now the Christ of faith is of permanent value to mankind; He is the dynamic source of the Christian life, and through this Ideal Man we have contact with God. The mere historical details of the earth-life of Jesus of Nazareth are after all of little value as long as the Christ of faith remains. This view seemed outwardly the continuance of the old Christian terminology without the underlying basis of historical fact. A weird and imaginary early Christianity was built up out of a supposed struggle between Petrinism and Paulinism in the Early Church. The present New Testament was the outcome of a compromise between these two Christian factions.

Then came a reaction of the historical sense and sober scholarship. A further attempt was made. Petrinism and Paulinism were after all mere fictions to bolster up a preconceived idea. Back to the documents themselves. Their correct age and authorship and text and historical circumstance must be ascertained on objective and purely scientific methods. This movement: "back to real history" has gone on these fifty years almost and the results are highly satisfactory from a Christian point of view. The New Testament was written practically at a time and by authors we always thought it was. Luke really wrote the third Gospel and the Acts between 60 and 70 A.D., if not earlier. Mark is certainly earlier than Matthew or Luke, perhaps even as early as 45 A.D. Matthew was written about 80-100 A.D., not indeed by the Apostle, but by some unknown

compiler, who embodied a larger collection of Sayings of Jesus, which may well have been gathered by Matthew the Apostle. The Apocalypse was written in the reign of Nero or Domitian. St Paul wrote the Pauline Epistles, except perhaps the Pastoral ones, and even these were perhaps patched together from real fragments of Pauline material. The fourth Gospel was not written by St John, but it *was* written just about the time we always thought it was, 90-110 A.D. by some other John, who may have used material known to him from John the son of Zebedee. The Epistle to the Hebrews was probably written somewhat before the fall of Jerusalem or soon after. St Peter wrote his First Epistle; the second one, going by his name, is not genuine, but perhaps written not long after his death.

In other words the New Testament is as a matter of fact a first-century document emanating from the Christian Society, the leaders of which had known Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, and St Mark's Gospel is the story told of the Founder within the lifetime of those who had eaten and drunk with Him and taken His own words from His lips.

In a way this result of feverish activity of numberless scholars is a great gain. The New Testament has been tried, it has passed through the fire and it has not been found wanting. Has it brought these scholars back to the real Christ? Hardly. The battle now rages directly round the Gospels themselves and the interpretation of the figure of Christ Himself. Miracles, they say, do not happen, but strange things do. No doubt strange things did happen in Galilee; the so-called healing or power miracles no doubt did take place; the so-called

miracles against nature did not. Did He rise from the dead? Well, the tomb was certainly found empty and the disciples sincerely thought He did, and perhaps there was some spiritual power emanating from the soul of Jesus affecting the minds of the disciples. Mere bodily resurrection is a gross idea after all, some spiritual resurrection, I dare say there was.

But then what about Jesus Himself? Did He realize? No, not quite. He did think Himself the Messiah. When success as Jewish Messiah was clearly impossible, He realized that the Messiah might be the Son of Man in the clouds according to Daniel, and He combined the two conceptions. He could only triumph if He died first. He began to think of His death as an atonement for the sins of the world, but immediately after His death He would come in triumph. He died, but He did not return. That of course was His mistake. However, Christianity has somehow started and His noble figure and His beautiful ideas have been the means of its success.

Such is the present phase of mental aberration about Christianity and its Founder. This phase, too, will pass away. What will be the next? That is difficult to say. The waywardness of the human mind is incalculable. The present phase will not last long. The picture drawn is too obviously impossible, too obviously a caricature of reality. It is too plain from the New Testament—if there is any truth in it at all—that Christ did not predict His return on the morrow of His death and the manipulation and isolation of texts to prove it are too evident. Besides, men, who predict their return on the clouds at a specified date and do not do so, do not found

religions like Christianity ; and men who are under such an insane hallucination about themselves and their future, men, afflicted with such mad megalomania, do not preach the Sermon on the Mount or speak the Gospel Parables. However much these modernists may disguise it and cover it over with courteous and reverential phrases, their portraits of the prophet at Nazareth is that of a madman. Their attempt to pass it off as that of a beautiful soul, just a little misled, may succeed for a day or so, and then—something else.

PART II

NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD INTO WHICH CHRIST WAS BORN

THERE are two very popular errors about the world into which Christ was born. Some, overcome by the glamour of modern discoveries, imagine that civilization began with the invention of steam and electricity ; for them, in consequence, two thousand years ago means two thousand years of retrogressions into barbarism. The Gospel-story they regard as a tale of the infancy of the human mind ; it all happened in the dim, unknown past ; it must all be very uncertain, very vague and very legendary—in any case historically worthless. Others err in the opposite direction. They have made their classical studies in art and literature. For them the days of the ancient Greeks and Romans form the golden age of mankind and no age can be compared with it. It was an age of refinement and culture, of the true and the highest civilization. With all their hearts they wish it back after the long dark night brought on Europe by “*das Maerchen von Christus*,” that “little silly story about Christ.”

Both err in some way, because they have no eye for the realities of history. Facts are mostly stranger than fiction. The world into which Christ was born was both the most refined and cultured and the most wretched and squalid age history knows. Material

prosperity and mental refinement went parallel with deep moral degradation and the sullen gloom of mental exhaustions and despair. The mere thought that it might come back again, would make one shudder.

The Græco-Roman world was one of astounding peace and well-being, of amazing splendour and political achievement, of an age of choice literature, of wonderful works of art, of profound but restless speculation. The three centuries that lie between 40 B.C. and 260 A.D. are in many respects those of the highest prosperity men have ever known.

Let us try for a moment to visualize the greatness of the Roman Empire. From the Scotch border to the confines of Persia, from the Rhine to the frontiers of the Sudan, from the Danube to the Sahara there was one well-ordered state with one single head and that State was in peace and in the enjoyment of safety and prosperity. It was possible to travel from the city of York in Britain to Edessa in Armenia, from Vienna on the Ister to Assouan at the first cataract of the Nile in comfort, comparative speed and without danger. Thus had Roman industry perfected the road-system of the then known world ; thus had the majesty of the Roman name checked the lawless forces on land and sea.

No doubt that empire had itself been built on force and on deeds of destruction in the past. In one year Rome had destroyed two of the principal cities of the world, representing two agelong civilizations in the Mediterranean, Corinth in the East and Carthage in the West ; but that was 146 years before Christ. Even in razing these two cities to the ground, she did not destroy the civilizations that were

born from them. She had indeed stopped the sacrifice of children to Melcarth by the Phœnicians, and she had worked the mines in Spain and Sardinia as well as the Carthaginians did, and after a century of desolation, she had rebuilt Carthage itself. In the same manner Corinth, though destroyed, was raised again as a centre of Græco-Roman civilization. In the administration of so vast an empire the Roman acted on principles of broad-mindedness and universal toleration. The conquered nations were no sooner incorporated in the Great Commonwealth than all was done to make their natural development smooth and easy. Their national language and customs were respected. Local bodies had the governing of provincial cities. Their link with the central administration was, though secure, yet sufficiently elastic. Before long these local bodies became proud of their connection with the Empire. Temples to Rome and Augustus were raised in numberless cities, devotion to the Empire had become a religion. The empire of the Pharaohs was the last to be absorbed. After the tragic death of Cleopatra, its noble queen, it fell without a struggle into the hands of the irresistible Roman. Nay, kings left their countries by will to what seemed the universal legatee of all human grandeur, as did Attalus of Pergamum. If Rome let native princes rule, as Herod in Palestine, Antiochus in Cilicia, or Abgar in Edessa, these potentates were only too eager to be Roman to the uttermost.

This far-flung Empire, though resting on military achievement in the past and on the present efficiency of its legionaries, was, in the days of Christ, held together by a force of not more than three hundred and forty thousand men, stationed along the frontiers

from the Rhine to the Euphrates. People to-day are sometimes under the impression that the Roman soldier was the most frequent and almost ubiquitous figure in Roman life. Nothing is more untrue to fact. England during the four hundred years of Roman rule had probably never ten thousand soldiers at one time on its soil. This small garrison sufficed to give security and peace to the Britons from 43 A.D., when it first became a Roman province, till 422 A.D. when the Roman legions left and their paternal rule came to an end. Even these detachments of the army were not flaunted before the natives in the great centres of population, but dwelt in fixed camps on the frontiers, as far distant from Rome as Colchester in England or the Gates of Trajan in Rumania. In the whole interior of present-day France twelve thousand men sufficed to maintain the rule of Rome and the safety of the land. The standing armies of Rome were, in proportion to the population, so small that only one in five hundred of the inhabitants had to serve in the ranks.

On the other hand the Roman system of law had gradually become so developed that it became the embodiment of legal justice, which compelled the admiration of men for two thousand years, and which in many of its principles rules human justice even to-day. To be a Roman citizen was a coveted honour and privilege, which filled provincials who obtained it with justifiable pride. Even St Paul, when in supreme danger from his fellow-countrymen, escaped his desperate foes by his claim: "I am a Roman citizen, I appeal to Cæsar"; and the Proconsul forthwith said: "To Cæsar thou appealest, to Cæsar shalt thou go." Even after twenty centuries the

influence of Roman jurisprudence is felt in practically all courts of the civilized world. There was in the Roman character a coolness of judgment, a desire for fair play, a moderation in the application of mere physical force, a respect for law as such, an absence of headlong passion, a severe practicality, a conservatism and a love of precedent which was, and is, without parallel among non-Christian peoples.

It was an age of great physical prosperity. There was food in plenty; there was but little hunger or squalor. Great cities, as Rome itself, had an easy food supply in the corn-fields of Egypt, transport being regular and safe by land and sea. Goods from markets a thousand miles away easily found their way to Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Arles or Ephesus. The three first-named cities displayed a splendour of architecture which even in its ruins dazzles the imagination.

The glories of Rome and Alexandria have often been described, less often those of Antioch, the Paris of the ancient world! Let us for a moment glance at the magnificence and luxuriousness of the city where Peter first ruled as bishop before he chose eternal Rome. Its site is somewhat like that of Edinburgh. The very rocks of the mountains at the foot of which it is built rise up in the midst of the city, but they did not hamper its mighty builders. The vast amphitheatre has its tiers partially cut out of the living rock, partially built up from blocks of stone. Seleucid Kings and Agrippa and more recently the Emperor Tiberius have all contributed to its enormous pile. There it stands resplendent in the brightness and the freshness of its glory. Thousands of workmen laboured at it while Joseph

the Carpenter plied his humble trade at Nazareth. This amphitheatre would seat the whole adult population of our present city of York, though it is by no means the only theatre of Antioch. A little further on are the summer Thermæ, and there are, too, the winter ones. These vast complexes of buildings represent institutions, of which we have no parallel nowadays. They are a combination of huge public baths, containing immense reservoirs of hot, cold and tepid water, and gymnasia—not boyish concerns, but more like rings for professional wrestlers—and covered colonnades for exercise in bad weather, and stadia for chariot racing. All this is connected and amplified and embellished by numberless porticoes and pillars and halls. Whilst we pass it we hear the din of hundreds of voices of people chatting and discussing as they saunter along and lounge about in its ample spaces. The use of these is not merely for the wealthy but for the general public, who can enter for a mere trifle.

There to the west is the Cæsareum, a basilica built by Julius Cæsar some forty years before Christ. It is called the Open-air Basilica because, on account of its great size, a court open to the sky was left in the centre. In the apse at the further end stands a bronze statue to the goddess Luck or Tyche of Rome; in the central court a statue of Cæsar, whom the Antiochians celebrate as a second founder of their city and from the year of whose victory at Pharsalis they actually start their Calendar.

Now we are walking on a road made by Herod, paved by him with polished slabs of white marble, and adorned with a covered way and a colonnade two miles long. There had been a terrible fire in Antioch three

or four years before Christ began His public life, but no vestige of it can be noticed now. Tiberius the Emperor soon came to the assistance of the third city of the Empire and the Temple and the Court of the Muses shine again in their former splendour in the Upper City. There in the Epiphania quarter stands the Capitol and a theatre; there the Temple of Bacchus, the Wine-god; and in front of it two gigantic statues of the Dioscuri. There is the Roman Gate, built a few years before by Tiberius; it is surmounted by the Wolf of Rome suckling Romulus and Remus. There stands a building which puts us in mind of the Four Courts of Dublin. It contains the Archives of Antioch. Before long it will be the prey of flames, owing to an insurrection in the town. The first generation of Christians could tell you all about that trouble, said to be caused by the Jews. A little distance from the town we have the famous Daphne Park, a garden and a forest combined, having a circumference of no less than ten miles. On our way we pass the sepulchral monument to Germanicus, whose sad death at Antioch must have been exciting news even to the villagers of Nazareth when Christ lived there. The body of Germanicus was solemnly cremated in the forum at Antioch, and over his funeral urn a monument was erected probably not very unlike the Albert Memorial of to-day. Once we are at Daphne we are in the pleasure garden of the East, a little earthly paradise, which nature and art have done their utmost to beautify; its paths and lanes and glades and dens, its curious buildings and dainty shrines are a miracle of taste and care.

Nor was it merely luxury to which ancient civilization ministered. We have not idly called the writings

of those days "classical literature," nor without reason made the knowledge of it the test of a cultured man. For grace of form, for exquisite keenness of speculation, for the expression of human passions and sorrows and doubts, the literature of Greece and Rome is until now a unique production of our race, not likely soon to be excelled. For love of beauty, and for the portraying of it in word or stone the Greeks and Romans will probably remain unparalleled till the end of days. The majesty of Virgil, the dainty grace of Horace, the refinement and power of Cicero, the austere precision of Tacitus, are a worthy imitation of the amazing greatness of Greek literature.

The days in which Christ was born seemed days of peace and safety, so secure that the gates of the Temple of Janus could be closed, for even he of the double face did not discern the grim shape of war in the immediate past or future. From the poets of those days it seems as if mankind was settling down to the undisturbed enjoyment of culture and happiness. The Golden Age was at last returning!

Yet the age in which Christ was born was one of unsurpassed wretchedness and degradation. It would be difficult to point to a time when the sum total of human misery and of the foulness of sin and despair was greater than then.

First there was slavery. The majority of human beings in the Roman Empire were slaves, not of that mitigated servitude which continued in Christian times and was a kind of benevolent serfdom in which the fundamental equality of human nature was recognized, but slaves in the strict sense of the word. There were probably somewhat over twenty million

slaves in Italy alone. What made their slavery more bitter was that they did not belong to some lower, less developed and more barbarous race than their masters, but were of the same colour and blood and nationality with them, and often exceeded them in ability, education and refinement. No doubt in many cases slaves were treated without brutality, because a slave represented property, and most people are careful in handling their own property. No doubt in many cases the instinctive human love for one's own kind softened somewhat the cruel fiction of the law that a slave was a thing, a chattel and nothing more; none the less there remained in pagan slavery a sum of misery and sin and degradation so appalling that it makes the mind sick to dwell upon it. Some seventy years before Christ was born the slaves in Italy had combined under the leadership of Spartacus and begun the terrible Slave War, in order to escape from Italy to freedom, to their native countries East and West, especially to Thrace, whence many came. For over two years they defeated the Roman forces sent against them, but finally they were overthrown. Tens of thousands fell in a series of battles, and Pompey crucified six thousand of them along the high-road from Capua to Rome. Soon the majority of human beings in that vast Empire in sullen despair had settled down again to cringe before a small minority of masters who claimed to own them body and soul—if they ever thought of such a thing as a soul.

A slave had no rights. Not even the right to marriage. His master of course allowed him to live with a woman, for the children of such unions became the master's property. Custom regarded such

unions as a sort of marriage, but full real marriage it never was. Only a free man could technically marry, and even he could not marry a slave. In the eyes of the law a slave could not commit adultery for only a married person could do so. A slave, boy or girl, had no protection against the lust or unnatural passion of his master or mistress, and even Cicero claimed that what we Christians now call unmentionable vice was a thing connived at by public opinion for generations. A slave could be sold and resold at will, therefore a slave had no home. Technically he could never own anything, all was his master's, only custom allowed him some perquisites. It was only after Christ was born that it became a technical offence in Roman law for a master to kill his slave without reason. Not that a slave was thought to have rights, but slave-killing had led to such weird excesses that it was considered advisable to restrain it somewhat. Pollio, a friend of the Emperor Augustus, fed his lampreys with human blood, and if a slave did something amiss he had him thrown alive into a cave of serpents. If a master were killed by a slave, all the slaves of the household were put to death, and even after Christ's birth the Senate enforced this law, on one occasion putting some four hundred men, women and children to death. When a slave got old or feeble, virtuous Cato's advice was to sell them. If too old or sick for sale, they could be left on the island in the Tiber to die. The foulness of slavery corrupted even the free, for children received their education from slaves, and slaves to gain some advantage pandered to the most degrading whims of their masters. Slavery was a cancer that ate into the very vitals of human life.

Immorality had made the most terrible ravages. The virtuous Cato of old had hired out his wife Marcia to his friend Hortensius, and after Hortensius's death he took his now wealthy wife back again. Cicero repudiated his faithful wife Terentia, the mother of his beloved daughter, to marry his young ward, a rich heiress, and then divorced her on a futile pretext. Yet Cicero is one of the noblest figures of Roman manhood. The Emperor Augustus himself, looked up to by all the world as a model man, the very delight of the human race, almost superhuman in nobility of character, forcibly abducted the wife of a nobleman and the mother of two children and kept her against her will. Even the Emperor's wife helped him to get concubines from everywhere. The empty cradles were the complaint of the patriots of those days, till heavy taxation punished those who shunned marriage. A woman was in law a perpetual minor, before marriage subject to her father, in marriage to her husband, after his death to her own sons; and yet, during the Empire given to such licence that with men she could gloat over the scenes of cruelty and lust in the public theatres. Who can read Martial's *Satires* and Petronius's *Miscellanies* without feeling a loathing horror for the degradation which they portray?

The magnificent theatres to which we referred above were, alas! the scenes of weirdest cruelty and depravity. This subject is so well known to all readers that I dare not weary them with descriptions in detail. A gladiatorial show might cost three thousand human lives on one day, as did the one which Titus gave to his soldiery. In the shows given by Trajan no less than ten thousand gladiators fought; and

men, women, nay, children, gloated over streams of human blood shed for their amusement, and often with incredible refinement of cruelty: to smell day after day the odour of burning human flesh, to hear wild beasts crunching the bones of men, gave them wild delight! Human life was incredibly cheap in those days and the dignity of man as man—distinct from his right of citizenship—almost non-existent. It seems to us to-day almost inconceivable that a judge should formally condemn a female prisoner *ad lupanar*, yet that was undoubtedly done. A wild desire for depraved pleasures raged in the hearts of men, for this life was their all. The life hereafter was to them possibly some vague ghostly existence as “the shades of the dead,” but not the life of reward or punishment for the things done in this world. As to tortures for the wicked in Hades, they said with scorn, none but babies in the nursery, *qui aere lavantur*, believe in them. This absence of any sure hope of a life beyond, the uncertainty of what was to be after death, the dismal ghostly existence which in popular superstition seemed to be the fate of the dead, cast a gloom on the ancient world, which no forced gaiety and no love of the beautiful succeeded in concealing.

Those who in reading the classics can read between the lines are perpetually struck by the irremediable sadness which lurks so often in the most stately as well as the most frivolous passages. Though we keep our *All Souls* in winter, it is brighter to us in November than it was for the old Romans, who remembered their dead on the 9th of May, by strewing at midnight beans through the house for the grim and greedy shades to devour to lessen for

a moment their ever-gnawing hunger, and be thus placated not to harm in malignant envy the living inmates of the home.

The Græco-Roman world was studded with sumptuous and stately temples to numberless gods, who were often celebrated with festive rite and artistic ceremony, but religion was in the utmost state of decay. It was a soulless thing. It had long been more a thing of mere duty than an act of love. Aristotle, the great philosopher, four centuries before, had already written: "It would be absurd for a man to say that he loved Jove," and a philosopher, contemporary with the Apostles, could mockingly ask: "Was there ever a man who said it?" The foul or foolish stories circulated about the gods in exuberant mythology seemed to make the gods favourers of filth and folly, and the fusion of so many nations in one empire had multiplied their number to such an extent that their list would weary the most enthusiastic worshipper. Of course every city or village shouted on occasion their equivalent for: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" but beyond a phrase of local patriotism it meant nothing. True, the craving for religion is never extinct in the human breast, and hence pathetic attempts were made to breathe some life—I mean real spiritual life—into at least some foreign cults. The Lord Serapis and the Lady Isis and Mithra, the Unconquered, roused some higher thoughts no doubt in many souls, but Cybele and Attis and Astarte of the Sidonians roused as many evil passions and made so-called religion a source of moral infection. The picture drawn by Juvenal of the devout female in his day fills one with pity and disgust. Thus religion itself, the normal

means of raising the public mind, had become a degrading influence. People had turned to lay philosophy for consolation. Seneca, a contemporary of Our Blessed Lord, was the most esteemed moral philosopher of the day. His Stoic philosophy is often couched in noble phraseology and sometimes in sentences which have a Christian sound; and Epictetus, a contemporary of St Paul and Marcus Aurelius, though he persecuted the Christians, gives expression to some noble sentiments, but stoicism was none the less a morality without a personal God to love and to obey, without a God who could punish or reward, without a firm promise of immortality, without contrition for sin, without real pity for one's fellow-man, without humility towards a Creator, without consolation for the weak and the erring, without real forgiveness after a fall. A religion of self-righteousness and pride, an attempt to become divine, which mocked the frailty of human nature, a haughty and bitter resignation to the inevitable and an impossible reliance on one's own righteousness. A religion which taught: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity," without being able to add the sweetening thought: "except to love God and to serve Him alone."

The nobler pagan souls in the days of Christ realized the degradation of their times and raised their voices in warning, but remedy they had none. Virgil, the most religious as well as the greatest of Roman poets, did some beautiful day-dreaming about a great Deliverer from human misery and a return of the Golden Age, and used words which seem a faint echo of Isaias the prophet, but the Child, which he welcomed, was one of merely human birth. Helpless,

sinful humanity had sunk so low that no mere man could save it, therefore God sent His Son, born of a woman, to bring salvation to the children of men, a salvation which wealth and grandeur and refinement and culture can never bring. All was hopeless and dark in that vast Græco-Roman world till the message came: "I bring you good tidings of great joy: a Saviour is born to you in the city of David, you shall find Him wrapt in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

CHAPTER II

OUR LORD'S ANCESTRY

EVERYONE knows that the Gospels contain two genealogies of Our Blessed Lord, one in St Matthew, the other in St Luke, and that in the most crucial section, that is from David to Christ, these two genealogies are totally different, agreeing only in two names, Zorababel and Salathiel, and of the remaining forty names in St Luke not a single one occurs in St Matthew! Moreover, in St Matthew only twenty-seven names are given between David and St Joseph, in St Luke forty between that king and Heli!

Here is a problem!

Not, indeed, the fact of the Davidic descent of Our Lord: that fact is beyond dispute. His own contemporaries never questioned it. "Son of David, have mercy on us," cried even the man in the street. St Paul, a Pharisee of Pharisees, proclaimed Christ "Son of David, according to the flesh," and even the learned in Jewry, who delighted in endless genealogies, did not dispute that fact, which, if it could have been made doubtful, would have shaken Christ's claim at the very root. A Messianic pretender, whose Davidic origin was not above suspicion, would have no conceivable chance of success. Christ's Davidic descent would not be in dispute, even if we had no genealogies at all.

Obviously, then, St Joseph was of Davidic stock ; that sufficed for the Jews, who thought him the real father of Jesus ; but will it suffice for us Christians, who know that St Joseph was only the foster-father, and that Mary was Virgin-Mother of Jesus ? Must we not believe that Mary was a daughter of David ?

Yes, I honestly think so. I would make no article of faith of it. If anyone held that St Joseph's legal fathership sufficed, for he was truly the husband of Mary, and Our Lord was born in wedlock, though Mary conceived of the Holy Ghost ; if anyone pleaded that Christ's Virgin birth was confessedly miraculous and unique, and that, therefore, Joseph was father in a unique yet true sense, the true husband of a sinless mother, who had borne in wedlock, and therefore father in every sense barring a physical one—I would not cry "Heresy !" but I would express my most vigorous dissent.

The Old Testament prophecies, too many to be quoted here, demand that the Messiah should be the real and physical descendant of David, not merely his heir-at-law. A Messiah without David's real blood in His veins would be a mockery of the Old Testament. And He would be equally irreconcilable with the New. St Paul's words : "Son of David, according to the flesh," would bear a meaning so strained and unnatural as not to be thought of.

St Luke's account would have to be explained away. Our Lady is described as : "A virgin, betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." It is unnatural to refer "of the house of David" to St Joseph, for lower down it is expressly stated as a necessary explanation about St Joseph : "He was of

the house and family of David," and this would be a useless repetition if it had already been told before. The first notice as to parentage belongs, therefore, to Mary, not to him. As referring to Our Lady, this clause is precisely what is required in the story of the Annunciation to introduce St Gabriel's words to her about her promised Son: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David *His father*." Imagine Our Lady were not of David's stock, but, say, a daughter of Aaron, a Levitess, therefore, how forced and unnatural this promise of the throne of David *His father* for her Son, who, as she is just being told, shall derive His human nature from her alone, as Virgin-Mother—of the family of Aaron and NOT of David! It seems playing with the New Testament to maintain such a thing. True, her cousin, St Elizabeth, was of the family of Aaron, but this surely was on her mother's side, not her father's. Moreover, the word we usually translate cousin may mean any family relation, and it is surely common sense to allow a daughter of David to have relatives in another tribe.

Now this obvious interpretation of the New Testament is endorsed by earliest Christianity. St Ignatius the Martyr, who was probably born before Our Lady's death, and may even have known her personally, writes in his letter to the Ephesians: "Our God Jesus Christ was carried in the womb of Mary; according to the plan of God from the seed of David indeed but of the Holy Ghost. He was born and He was baptized in order to purify the waters [of baptism] through His Passion." St Ignatius seems to have the text of Luke in mind, in which the genealogy of Our Lord is given in connection with

His baptism. That he held Our Lady to be the Seed of David can hardly be doubted. St Justin the Martyr, born c. 100 A.D., about twenty miles from Jerusalem, in at least three passages distinctly states : "Jesus was born of the Virgin from the race of Abraham and the tribe of Juda, and the branch of David," and he says so to Trypho the Jew, to whom he would not have made a statement which Jews could easily disprove if it were not true. St Irenæus, born in Asia Minor, about the year 120 A.D., testifies in the same sense. That Our Lady, therefore, was of David's family no reasonable man should doubt.

Quite so, you think ; this, no doubt, is the explanation of the two different genealogies, St Matthew's is St Joseph's pedigree and St Luke's is Our Lady's. St Joseph descended from David by his son Solomon, and Our Lady by his other son Nathan, hence the two pedigrees vary throughout. This, beyond question, seems at first sight the best and simplest explanation, which I daresay, most of us will finally think the most satisfactory ; but it was certainly not the usual idea for nearly fifteen hundred years. The usual opinion decidedly was that both genealogies were those of St Joseph, and an echo of this opinion we still find in a note to our own Douay version.

But how could the same person have two totally different pedigrees ? Let me explain. Heli, the first ancestor mentioned by St Luke, and Jacob, the first mentioned by St Matthew, were half-brothers, having the same mother but not the same father. Heli married but died childless. Hereupon Jacob, to fulfil the Mosaic law, "to raise up seed to his brother," married Heli's widow, who then bore him a son, viz., St Joseph, the future husband of Mary. In Jewish

law, therefore, Joseph counted technically as son of Heli, though, in physical fact, he was the real son of Jacob. St Luke, therefore, gives the legal line, St Matthew the real one. If it is further asked: How do you know that Jacob and Heli were half-brothers on the mother's side only, although they were both Davidites? The answer is: Mathan, St Joseph's grandfather, according to St Matthew, had married a woman called Estha, and had by her his son Jacob; and after Mathan's death this same Estha married Melchi, whom St Luke mentions as St Joseph's grandfather, and she had by him a second son called Heli. Now, both Mathan and Melchi were of David's family, the first by Solomon's line and the second by Nathan's. In consequence, the two pedigrees vary totally from Heli to David, that is through a thousand years, for David was born roughly one thousand years before Christ. The two lines only once met during these ten centuries in Salathiel and his son Zorobabel, to part again, no doubt, owing to the same Levirate Law of Moses, for King Jechonias died childless.

But how do we know all that? I will have to tell you a long story.

There was once a man called Sextus Julius Africanus. He was an army man, he was well-known in the military and political circles of his day. He had joined the Roman Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia in 195 A.D. He had become very intimate with the native reigning prince of Osrhoene, in those parts called Abgar the Ninth, and became a hunting companion of his young son, later Abgar the Tenth. He lived for years at the military station at Nicapolis, about twenty-four miles from Jerusalem,

and was very keen on local affairs. In fact, he headed a mission of his fellow-citizens to Rome to get the Government to grant a proper charter to their locality, and create it a borough. He himself was born in the city of Jerusalem; his cognomen, Africanus, points to some connection of his people with what we now call Tunis and Algeria. This influential officer was a Christian, whether from birth or a convert, we know not. King Abgar was a Christian—in fact, the first Christian Sovereign history knows of—perhaps he had much to do with the conversion of this smart officer. Some twenty years after the Mesopotamian expedition our Sextus Julius sat at the feet of Heraclas in the Catechetical School—a sort of Catholic Evidence Guild—at Alexandria. He was a man of wide interests: military science, veterinary surgery, agriculture, all came his way; but history, especially Church history, was his hobby. He compiled a sort of dictionary of universal knowledge, which went under the title of *Miscellaneous or Marvellous Facts*, a work which contained many items more curious than edifying. He dedicated it to Alexander Severus, who made him Imperial Librarian. He also wrote a summary of history from the beginning of the world till 221 A.D. His literary output betrays a man who combined his Christian faith and his keen intelligence with the quaintest superstitions and surprising freedom of expression.

Of this interesting personality we possess two long letters. The one to Origen of Alexandria does not come within our present scope, but the other is all about Our Lord's genealogy. Its precise date is not known, but it is addressed to a person called

Aristides. It is very long, almost a little treatise, but, alas! it has not come down to us complete.

Now, in this letter, he inveighs most strongly against the nonsense of some people who try to make out that because Our Lord is both priest and king, He must have descended from both the tribes, the kingly tribe of Judah (David's tribe) and the priestly tribe of Levi. He grows justly indignant, moreover, about the erudite trifling of those who try to use the two pedigrees of Matthew and Luke to bolster up this preposterous statement. Of course, Christ is both priest and king; but this sublime spiritual dignity has no need of being supported by a double bodily descent from Judah and Levi! Our Julius then propounds his scheme to explain the Matthæan and Lucan genealogies, and his scheme is the one given above: they both refer to St Joseph, and are explained by the Levirate Law of Deuteronomy and the double marriage of Estha. He felt that his friend Aristides would want to know where he got all that information from, so he adds as follows: "Now this is not a mere unproven and casual assertion. At least, relatives of the Saviour, be it perhaps because they wanted to boast about it, or that they merely wished to give information, in any case, quite truthfully have handed down as follows." But before telling you what Africanus said, I must first tell you something about these relatives of Our Lord.

The brethren and the sisters of Our Lord were clearly very well known at Nazareth and in the circles where the Apostles and earliest Christians moved. James, Joseph, Simon and Judas are actually mentioned in the New Testament by name. There

is no need to prove here that in Biblical phraseology brother or sister does not necessarily mean children of the same parents, no more than *fratello* in present-day Italian necessarily means one's brother or *parent* in present-day French father or mother. However, they were close relatives of some kind, probably cousins, or possibly half-brothers or sisters by St Joseph in a former marriage. Besides these, the Gospel mentions St Elizabeth, Our Lady's cousin; and also a sister of Our Lady who stood with her under the Cross. St Paul in his letter to the Galatians in Asia Minor tells them that at Jerusalem he saw James, the brother of the Lord, and he mentions James as a well-known witness of the Resurrection on Easter Day. St James became first Bishop of Jerusalem, and after his martyrdom c. 62 A.D. the surviving Apostles and disciples, and also the relatives of Our Lord (many of whom were then still alive) came together and chose Simeon of Cleophas, another cousin of Our Lord, as James's successor. After the fall of Jerusalem the Roman Emperor Vespasian, in order to stifle the Messianic hopes of the Jews, had the descendants of David everywhere hunted down and put to death. He seems, however, not to have quite succeeded in destroying David's family, for five-and-twenty years later Domitian again ordered the death of all Davidites, who could be found. On that occasion some treacherous Christians (?) heretics of some kind, betrayed some of the then living relatives of Our Blessed Lord to the Government. They were two grandsons of Judas, Our Lord's cousin.

These were brought before Domitian in person. He examined them on their Davidic descent, which

they at once acknowledged. He wanted to know what position they occupied in society. As he put it brutally: How much were they worth in cash and property? They answered that they had a capital of about 9000 denarii (say, £400) between them, not in cash, but in land values; they had about nine acres, they said, which they jointly worked, and out of the proceeds of which they had to live, and—as they slyly reminded his Imperial Majesty—they had to pay his heavy taxes. They showed him their rough and clumsy hands, and appealed to their weather-beaten features to prove that they were but simple peasants and labouring men. Domitian, however, was not quite satisfied. He asked them about Christ and about His supposed kingdom. They assured him that this was only an angelic and celestial kingdom at the end of the ages. The Emperor had another good look at them, and, realizing that they were but common people, he dismissed them with contempt. As confessors of the faith and as relatives of the Saviour they later on became bishops, and they lived till the reign of Trajan c. 100 A.D. Distant relatives of Christ seem to have been known till well on in the second century; they went by the name of “Desposynoi,” or “the Lord’s people,” “the Master’s folk.” Now, these people had handed down, so says Julius Africanus, although he is not likely to have come into personal contact with them, that Herod the Great, annoyed at the thought of himself not being a full-blooded Jew, but only an Idumæan upstart, had destroyed the public registers of births and marriages, so that at Herod’s death people had to rely on their memories, or on private copies of family pedigrees;

and that experts, or people who take interest in these things, restored, with the aid of the Books of Chronicles, the correct family trees. The Lord's people were among these, and from Nazareth and Cochaba, a village to the east of the Jordan, they went about and explained the above-mentioned pedigree as best they could.

When Africanus has given us their explanations, he seems to warn us of his own lack of complete trust in the affair, for he adds: "Whether therefore the matter stands in this way or not, a simpler explanation no one is likely to find; at least, that is my opinion, and of anyone of common sense. This, in consequence, must suffice us, even if it were not attested at all, because we have not got a better or a truer one to put forward."

Well, perhaps so. However, that matter of Herod's burning the Jewish registers has seemed to not a few rather doubtful. But to others it seems to receive confirmation from other sources, which suggest some interference with public genealogies at that time. Certainly, at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and still more, later in 133 A.D., the almost total extermination of Jewish civil life from Palestine these records were completely lost. Records of Davidic pedigree have now completely vanished, and even the name *Cohen*, i.e., priest, is to-day but the most shadowy guarantee that the holder is a descendant of Aaron.

Now, Africanus's explanation has had good fortune. Popularized by being quoted by Eusebius, the father of Ecclesiastical History, it has been copied out and repeated throughout the ages, and finds staunch defenders even to-day. Strange, but true, the opinion

which Africanus so vigorously combats about Our Lord's double descent from Aaron and from David, and, therefore, His combined royal and sacerdotal dignity, has also been repeated down the ages times without number. Not, of course, that men always utilized the Gospel genealogies for the purpose; they merely said that the two tribes had often intermarried. By the way, the statement one sometimes sees in print that the Jews were bound to marry within their own tribe is completely untrue. A Jew could marry anyone he liked; even a priest, or even the High Priest was perfectly free to marry any virgin of Israel. The only restriction on tribal intermarriage applied to heiresses, lest tribal property should be alienated. Hence, it is sometimes said that Our Lady, being an only child and daughter, had to marry within her own tribe. Perhaps so, but then it sufficed to marry a man of Judah, not necessarily of David's family.

Africanus's explanation seems plausible, yet there are very serious difficulties against it.

First and foremost: It applies the Levirate law about raising up seed to one's deceased brother to half-brothers on the mother's side. There is no record in Bible or history of such an application, and its obligation seems unreasonable. In this way a man could belong to a tribe without having one drop of the blood of the tribe in his veins. Let me give an example. Two Jews, one of the tribe of Dan, the other of the tribe of Benjamin, happen to have the same mother. Now, the first of the tribe of Dan marries but dies childless, the second of the tribe of Benjamin has to marry his widow, who happens to be a lady of Ephrem. The child of this union would

be a Benjaminite with an Ephremite mother; in what sense would he be a Danite? Supposing, according to Levirate law, he were to pass as a Danite, and then married a lady from Manasse, how much Danite blood would there be in his child? Considering that a Jew was at liberty to marry a woman of any tribe, how in this way could tribal descent be kept pure? Of course, two pious Jews may thus have understood and applied the law; it is possible, but their fellow Jews would certainly have thought it a work of supererogation. Then, again, the application of St Luke's genealogy to St Joseph is apparently not the oldest tradition. Africanus is early, but St Justin and St Irenæus are still earlier. St Justin was born not many miles from Jerusalem about the year 100 A.D. St Irenæus was from Asia Minor, and born some thirty years later: both, in any case, were much older than Africanus, who survived to at least 221 A.D. When reading these two fathers, it is hard to resist the conviction that they took for granted that St Luke's genealogy was Our Lady's. Here are some of St Justin's words: "Our Lord called Himself Son of Man, either because of His birth from the Virgin, who descended, as I have said, from the family of David and Jacob and Isaac and Abraham, or because Adam himself was father of these people enumerated [in the pedigree] from whom Mary traced her family."

That St Justin here thinks of St Luke's list of names which ends with Adam can hardly be called in question.

St Irenæus is equally unmistakable. "A virgin being obedient [in contrast to Eve's disobedience which he had mentioned] became both to herself and

to the whole human race the cause of salvation. On account of this [Mary, the second Eve, being a cause of salvation, as the first Eve had caused death] the Lord said that the first should be last and the last first. And the Prophet signifies the same, saying: Instead of fathers, you have children. For whereas the Lord, when born, was the first-begotten of the dead and received into His bosom the primitive fathers, He regenerated them into the life of God, He Himself becoming the beginning of the living, since Adam became the beginning of the dying. Therefore, also Luke, commencing the line of generations from the Lord, referred it back to Adam, signifying that He regenerated the old fathers, not they Him, into the Gospel of life." "And so the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith." These words, and, in fact, the whole chapter (iii. 32) become unintelligible, if the Lucan list of names going back from Christ to Adam is not Our Lady's but St Joseph's genealogy.

This brings us to the third point. St Matthew writing for Jews in order to prove that Jesus was the promised Messias, aptly begins his Gospel with Our Lord's genealogy from David downwards to St Joseph, Our Lord's father in Jewish law. St Luke wrote for the Gentiles, who had no particular interest in Christ's Davidic descent. Hence, St Luke does not stop at David in his genealogy, he goes back to Adam himself. Why? To prove that St Joseph, who was not the real father of Christ, was a child of Adam? Was there any doubt about that? And imagine there was a doubt about St

Joseph's being a child of Adam, would St Luke have proven it by beginning with Heli, who was not St Joseph's father at all, except by a fiction of Jewish law, Heli being really only his father's half-brother on his father's mother's side? No, you say, it is not St Joseph's genealogy as such, it is Our Lord's genealogy along St Joseph's line. But did not St Luke know that St Matthew had already given that, and did he want to improve upon it by giving not the *real* line, but only one in legal fiction, and that not in the royal Solomonic line, but in the obscure one of Nathan? How strange, if he meant that, to emphasize in so many words that St Joseph was only SUPPOSED TO BE the father of Our Lord! How strange that he should have chosen a legal line only instead of a *real* one!

Besides, why did he go back to Adam at all? Why did he, after Adam's name add the solemn "who was of God"? Why did he put this genealogy after the account of the Baptism of Christ; in fact, connect it therewith?

St Justin and St Irenæus evidently knew what St Luke meant, and it is the only satisfactory explanation, I believe, that exists. God the Father at Christ's baptism had spoken from the heavens: "Thou art My dearly beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." The divine Sonship, thus proclaimed by the heavenly Father, constituted Our Lord the second Adam, the new beginning of the human race. Our Lord was then, indeed, a grown man about thirty years of age, supposed to be merely the son of another man; but, in reality, then was born the new Adam. He was then officially constituted and proclaimed the Representative of the human race, and the human race

began in Him anew. The first Adam also had in a lesser sense been from God. God had formed him from the slime of the earth and breathed into him the spirit of life, but greater and nobler things had happened now. God had formed the Second Adam in the womb of a Virgin-Mother, a Second Eve; indeed, the Mother of the Living, and now at Baptism God proclaimed Him, when the Spirit of God hovered over Him in the waters, the Second Head of the human race. He stood there in the fullness of His Manhood, thirty years old, as sinless Adam stood in Paradise on the day God made him. He stood there apparently only one link more in a long chain of generations, thought to be a carpenter's son, but, in fact, "O APXOMENOC," *the Great Beginner*, "the First Born from the dead," as St Paul, Luke's companion, would have expressed it. These dead were the Patriarchs from Adam to the father of the Virgin-Mother. St Luke does not set out laboriously to prove anything, he merely states: The Great Beginner sums up within Himself all those who had gone before, and whose son He was according to the flesh, this Adam's child acknowledges, and by His acknowledgment, redeems His earthly forefathers back even to Adam, who, now, again, is God's.

NOTES

1. St Luke did not say: "The son of Joseph who was the son of Heli," but "being, as it was supposed, the son of Joseph, of Heli," and of the following seventy names, all prefixed with the genitive of the Greek article. The words, "Who was the son" before "of Heli," are not in the original. If they were, there

would, of course, be no question at all. The genealogy would be unquestionably St Joseph's.

2. Some think that St Luke should have said: "The Son of Mary, who was the daughter of Joachim." St Luke, by saying that Our Lord was only *supposed* to be the Son of Joseph, and not really so, sufficiently referred to the Virgin-Mother, without repeating the words, as some think he ought to have done. The story of the Virgin birth had been elaborately told by St Luke, and he thought his readers would still remember it.

3. There are enough difficulties in the genealogies to fill many chapters. There is the difference in the numbers of generations. From David to St Joseph, St Matthew gives fourteen, St Luke forty-one. St Matthew obviously makes no attempt to be complete. Names are left out which every Jew knew. On what principle were they omitted? Why such stress on 3×14 generations? Was it because David (Daleth, Vau Daleth) in cabbalistic ciphering makes 14, *i.e.*, $4 + 6 + 4$? Was it perhaps written thus in the original Aramaic? Why are four women mentioned: a foreigner, a harlot, an adulteress and an incestuous woman? Was it an indirect reply to the calumnies of Jewry about Mary? Some think so, but there is evidence that the presence of these women in the Messianic genealogy was an object of rabbinical speculation independently of the Gospels. Why did St Luke have seventy-two generations? The list is obviously not complete. Is the number an allusion to the seventy-two nations into which the world was divided, to show that the Second Adam is the Saviour of all the world? The recent literature on the point in French and German is quite extensive. Only a few points which might interest the general reader are touched upon.

4. Some plead: "If the material at the disposal of the sacred writers was faulty, the gift of inspiration could do nothing to rectify the error," but this would

be contrary to the teaching of the Church. The Church teaches that there is no error in the Bible, for God wrote it, and God does not err. The inspired writer did not indeed receive any revelation, but he *was* shielded against *error* in the use of the existing material. The human author might, of course, quote without guaranteeing the truth of his quotations. But the use of such mere unguaranteed quotations must always be *proved*, and not assumed, as the Church distinctly warns us. Erroneous genealogies are not very helpful to anybody.

5. The name of Joachim for Our Lady's father rests on a very insecure basis. It first occurs in an apocryphal Gospel. It was practically unknown in the West for almost fifteen hundred years. The feast-day in honour of Our Lady's father does, of course, guarantee his sanctity, but not the correctness of his name.

6. Those who accept Africanus's explanation are in goodly company. Many scholars do. Others do not. Whatever it is, it is hardly simple. It bristles with difficulties. A few are enumerated in this chapter. I am sorry that it is not more helpful. Having given the problem hard thought, I have not been able to solve it. No scholar up to the present has claimed that he has. Some people find it helpful to face a problem, even though they do not find a certain solution.

7. Some demur to connecting the words, "of the house of David" (Luke i. 27), with Our Lady, but the context imperatively demands it. If the words are connected with St Joseph, there is no sense in the words of Gabriel that Mary's Son shall have the throne of David, *His father*. St Luke had just explained that the Child's Mother was a *virgin* and could not therefore immediately afterwards ascribe His Davidic origin to St Joseph. St Luke, in chap. ii., 4, says that St Joseph went to the city

of David because he was of the house and family of David. This he would not have stated if he had already said so shortly before. Careful writers like St Luke do not repeat themselves so needlessly. If St Luke wanted to say that Mary was of the house of David in order to prepare the reader for Gabriel's statement that her Son was to sit on the throne of David, His father, he could hardly have done it in a shorter and neater way than he has done. He wrote, "the virgin's name was Mary," instead of "her name was Mary," no doubt, again, to emphasize her virginity after having stated that she was "betrothed." Jewish betrothals gave the man full marital rights; unlike our betrothals, which are only a promise of future marriage, they were actual marriage contracts with full marital rights, only called "betrothals," because the bridegroom had not as yet fetched the bride home. What the Aramaic order of the words was is difficult to say. It is not unlikely that the relative "whose" in the sentence "whose name was Joseph" and the verb "was" were both omitted. In Semitic the relative is of rarer use, especially in this connection. The text probably had "espoused to a man, Joseph his name, of the house of David."

CHAPTER III

THE VIRGIN-MOTHER

THAT one woman should have worn the double crown of motherhood and maidenhood is for the modern mind a hard thing to believe. In consequence a Christianity without the Virgin-birth and the Resurrection is the aim of many whom sentiment prevents from cutting themselves quite adrift from their religious past, yet whom an obstinate persuasion prevents from believing in a virgin-born Child or a man risen from the dead. These people have persuaded themselves that it is possible to attach some sort of historical value to the New Testament and early documents of the Christian religion, and yet to reject these two obnoxious dogmas, which they say are not as well accredited as the other facts of the Saviour's life. Yearly during the Christmas season attempts are made in the public press to retain some meaning and value for the Message of Bethlehem, while casting aside the fact that a Virgin did conceive and bear a Son, whose name is Emmanuel, that is God-with-us.

Millions will read these vague effusions of the daily Press and momentarily feel some soothing of their religious cravings in them, thinking they may still find some comfort in the thought of the Child, though they refuse to pay homage to His Mother as a maid. In such cases it is cruel to be kind, it is cruel not to

tear away the veil of this foolish illusion, not to show that a Christianity without the Virgin-Mother is a self-contradiction so flagrant that at most it can only satisfy mental confusion for a moment and must, before long, be cast aside as a patent absurdity. The Virgin-Mother sits enthroned with her Christ-Child at her bosom, and the throne of both rests upon the authority of Christianity. Undermine that Seat of Wisdom, and both Mother and Child are thrown headlong in the stagnant pool of mythology.

Listen and judge.

We possess two Gospel accounts of the Birth of Christ, St Matthew and St Luke. Barring the Resurrection, there is perhaps nothing in the life of Christ better attested than this. Against an account in the three Synoptics, *i.e.*, SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke, it is often objected that in reality we have only ONE witness, not THREE, because, so it is said, the Synoptic accounts are only copies of one another. You find the whole of St Mark in either St Matthew or St Luke. These two, so it is said, are not independent witnesses at all, they only copy out one testimony with trifling variants in the wording. Now in the Gospel of St John there is, with the exception of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection, nothing whatever in common with the three Synoptics, barring the account of two miracles. In consequence, for the facts of Christ's life we have, so it is asserted, just one witness, that's all. Well, I totally disagree, but for argument's sake, let it pass for a moment. At least for the Virgin-birth we have *two* witnesses, for no one I fancy could deny that the two accounts of St Matthew and St Luke are completely independent of one another. Read them and see.

The one begins with a genealogy, the other ends with it ; the one gives Christ's ancestors from Adam to Joseph, the other only from Abraham to Joseph. The one runs from the present to the past ; the other from the past to the present, and what is most remarkable in the whole list of ancestors from David to Christ there is only one single name, or possibly two, which is the same ! How can these two lists be reconciled ? We discussed this in the previous chapter. One thing is plain : these two did not copy from one another, they are utterly independent. The one tells us all about St Joseph, the visions he had and the things he thought and did, and the prophecy of Isaias that was fulfilled ; and the Magi and Herod the King, and the slaughter of the infants. The other tells us nothing of St Joseph, except his bare name, it is all about Mary, the message of the Angel to her, her visit to Elizabeth, the birth of John and the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and Angels in the sky, and the coming of the simple shepherds, and Anna and Simeon, and the latter's prophecy to Mary. If ever two accounts of an event were independent of one another, surely these two are. They have not got a word in common, they do not contradict one another it is true, they supplement one another. With the exception of the two names Joseph and Mary and that Christ was born of a Virgin at Bethlehem, one could not imagine two accounts of the same Fact more completely divergent.

The two stories come as it were from two different worlds : the one is the world of the foster-father, the other the world of Mary. The two ultimate informants must of course be the two parents of the Child ; no one else could know what Joseph thought

in his heart, or what Mary said to the Angel, but as these two gave their testimony, they gave it just as their own, hence they corroborate one another but dwell on different items of the story, leaving just this in common: the Child was born of a Virgin at Bethlehem in the days of Herod. The knowledge, therefore, of the Virgin-birth of Christ had spread in the earliest Christian community, earlier even than the composition of these two Gospels, which independently of one another tell Christ's birth story, based on the belief in the Virginity of His Mother.

When was Luke written? Most scholars now admit some time before 61 A.D., for it is only common-sense to suppose that the second volume of Luke's work, which ends abruptly with St Paul's two years' sojourn in a hired house at Rome, was finished before St Paul was martyred in the Neronian persecution. And St Matthew? Moderns will have it that St Mark is earlier than St Matthew. Well, let it be, many scholars now would put St Mark about 45 A.D., and even if St Matthew is later, and even if the Publican-Apostle himself did not write all of it, it cannot well be much later than St Luke. Now one thing is perfectly evident, St Luke's first three chapters, St Luke's account of Christ's birth, were not composed straightway by himself. He uses some ancient documents. Anyone, who has the slightest instinct for literary composition sees this at a glance. St Luke is a cultured Greek and opens his Gospel with a long involved sentence quite after the approved style of Greek classicists, spread over four long verses, needing eighty words to express it in our Douay version. As a matter of fact he had built up this

noble period on the model of an opening of well-known medical treatise of his own day. Luke was a physician; what more natural than that echoes of his medical works should ever be in his ears. Then in verse 5 he begins with all the plain simplicity of a Hebrew story-teller, giving an account, the original of which is clearly not Greek but Hebrew or Aramaic. One tastes the flavour of the Hebrew through the thin covering of Greek words. St Luke proves again and again that he could write good Greek when he wanted to, but he had some sacrosanct Hebrew parchment before him and gives it as it stood. No Greek could have written the Magnificat and the Benedictus and Simeon's song of farewell, however much he tried. It is Hebrew poetry. The Benedictus contains a word play on the names of Zachary and Elizabeth and of Jesus, which only a Jew could appreciate. Zachary means: Jehovah remembers; Elizabeth: God's oath; Jesus means the bringer of salvation of the Saviour; John means Jehovah is merciful. Now Zachary sings of "a horn of salvation in the house of David," of God giving "salvation from our enemies," "of performing mercy to our fathers," of remembering His holy testament, the oath which He swore to Abraham. John, the forerunner of Jesus, is "to give knowledge of salvation to His people unto remission of their sins through the tenderness of the mercy of God." The same Benedictus has in its very wording at least nine or ten allusions to Old Testament prophecy. Only some one who thought in Hebrew, some one steeped in Old Testament ideas like a pious Jewish priest in Jerusalem, could have written that song. A Greek medical man of Antioch is as likely to have com-

posed those verses as a Frenchman is likely to have composed a Sonnet of Shakespeare.

The Magnificat of Our Lady is as Hebrew to the core as the Song of Anna in the First Book of Samuel and, moreover, contains echoes from the so-called Psalms of Solomon, sung by Jews to express their craving for a Deliverer and their anticipation of His coming when Mary's parents were young, and no doubt when Mary herself was a child. But not merely the songs of Zachary, Mary, Simeon and the Angels are Hebrew in tone, but all persons speak and act so as to betray themselves Jews, religious Jews of Palestine.

The shepherds say: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this Word that is come to pass which the Lord hath shewed us." The Angel Gabriel says: "No word shall be impossible with God." In what language but Hebrew has "word" the meaning of "thing, affair, deed"?

Who but a Jewess like Elizabeth, when wanting to say: "O most blessed of women," would have used the phrase "blessed among (or in) women," because her language cannot form superlatives as we can?

Not only the words, however, but the very thoughts are those of Jews of the Old Testament before the New Testament was revealed. They speak and act as only Jews would. If this account was a faked account when Christianity had already spread to the ends of the earth through Pauline preaching, if it was conceived when the Jewish nation had rejected their Messiah and Israel rejected the Christ, or when Jerusalem was destroyed and not a stone was left upon a stone of the Temple of God, then this account is one of superhuman cleverness in wilful deception.

The opening date is given as "in the days of Herod, the King of Judea" but after 40 A.D. everyone would have asked : "Which Herod?" One might as well give an English date as "in the days of George King of England." When there had been only one George, or within a few years after the death of some George, this might be natural, but how quaint if it were during the reign of another George or many years after the Georges ceased to reign!

Zachary and his wife are described as "walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord." Who but a pious Old Testament Jew would praise in such terms, soon set aside in Christianity where grace and faith predominate, but here quoted from the 118th Psalm? Zachary was of the course of Abia, and Elizabeth a daughter of Aaron, and Anna, a daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser, and Zachary exercised his priestly functions in order of his course before God, and the Angel stood at the right side of the altar of incense, and the people in the court of the Temple wondered why their priest remained so long inside. Now who would have cared for these details, who would have thought of them but a Jew, to whom the Temple service was still the greatest divine reality on earth?

Note that the Virgin-Mother ends her Psalm of thanksgiving with praising God, who hath received Israel His servant, as He spoke to our fathers Abraham and to his seed for ever; that Zachary begins his Psalm with blessing the Lord God of Israel for having wrought the redemption of His people and brought salvation from their enemies; that Simeon foretells that the Child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many in Israel, and that He is a light to the

Gentiles and the glory of His own people Israel ; that Anna, the prophetess, spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel ; that Gabriel promised that unto Mary's Son God should give the throne of David His Father and the rule over the house of Jacob for ever.

Note all this, and realize that for the actors in the tender drama of Christ's Nativity the centre of all thought is still Israel, God's own people, their liberty, their glory, the house of Jacob and the throne of David for ever.

Had someone in later years when the glory of Israel had departed for ever, only imagined all this story, how could he not have betrayed his further knowledge at least in the choice of his words? Luke's Gospel is often called the Gospel of Universalism, and truly so, but in the account of Christ's birth there is no glimpse of this Universalism, but one word of Simeon's, and even that is only to the glory of Israel, and says no more than Isaias said seven hundred years before.

Many modern scholars, therefore, acknowledge that Luke's account is derived from Mary, the Mother, herself, or at least from some woman to whom she revealed her secrets, the things she pondered over in her heart. Some scholars even have guessed the woman informant of St Luke. For a woman it certainly was : no man would have told these details or have told them thus. They have guessed it was Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, a woman whom St Luke alone mentions and who is otherwise unknown.

If, then, we have the testimony of Joseph in St Matthew, of Mary in St Luke, what more, what else could we possibly demand?

But St Mark says nothing of the Virgin-birth, it is objected. How could he, considering he begins with the baptism of John? St Mark gives the public catechetical instructions of the Apostles. They were official witnesses of Christ's public life, His teaching, His Passion, His Resurrection, and their official testimony as eye-witnesses began with Christ's baptism in the Jordan. What more natural? It does not prove that the early Christians did not know of or not believe the Virgin-birth. Christ was a man in the fullness of His Manhood when He began His preaching, and surely His followers and after them the first Christians *must* have possessed SOME account of His infancy, youth and early manhood, at least sufficient to realize that He was the Son of David. Human curiosity was ever the same: the early Christians must have inquired into the history of the early years of Him whom they designated, as even St Mark does, as SON OF GOD! Yet St Mark does *not* give it. Evidently not because he had no information on the subject, but because it suited his purpose to give the Apostles' testimony. What *they* had seen, *they* could witness to. Mary alone and Joseph, in a sense, was the only God-appointed because the only possible witness of the Virgin-birth. In the earliest years of the Christian community at Jerusalem, Mary herself was still among her Son's followers as she was with them on Pentecost Day. Her Virginity, however absolutely believed, could hardly have been a theme of public instruction. She herself was the teacher of that sublime mystery, and the sacred doctrine went from lip to lip for a time till it was embodied in the ancient Hebrew or Aramaic account, written either by her or at her

request or from her information, an account which Luke of Antioch was fortunate enough to secure for his description of Christian beginnings.

That St Mark did not know, is an utterly gratuitous assertion, and Mark vi. 3, which puts on the lips of the folk of Nazareth the question: "Is not this the carpenter, Mary's Son?" rather than: "Is not this the carpenter's Son," as St Matthew puts it, is a strong suggestion, if not a proof, that he did.

But St John knows nothing about it, so it is claimed. Now, if anything be historically certain, it is that when the fourth Gospel was written Matthew and Luke were already in currency and the author *must* have known their accounts of the Virgin-birth. Abstractly speaking, it is conceivable that he rejected them, but it is not tenable that he did not know them. At the end of the first century, "born of the Virgin Mary" was already in the baptismal creed of Christians, and that the author of the fourth Gospel did not know this is a monstrous improbability. Christ on the Cross committed His Mother to the care of John, and in John's keeping surely she must have remained till her death. Now, if this John knew that the current stories about the Virgin-Mother were in reality false, that Mary denied them, surely it was his solemn duty to correct them plainly. If not true, such stories could only be a danger to Mary's good name.

Now St John, so far from repudiating them, presupposes them. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we have seen His Glory as that of the only-begotten Son of the Father." Such language is much

more in harmony with a Virgin-birth than with the natural begetting of a human father. To become flesh is not the usual phraseology for a child's birth in any language, as far as I know. When this unusual and far-sought expression is applied to the entrance into this world of God the Word, the Only-begotten of the Father, then the obvious reason for the choice of these words is that John believed Mary's story as known to us in the Evangelists. Moreover, there is a second-century reading of John i. 13, which directly asserts the Virgin-birth: "Who WAS born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," thus applying this verse to Christ's own human birth rather than to the spiritual birth of the faithful, as we read in the Douay: "Who ARE born," etc. Whether this is the true reading I cannot say: in any case in the second century they did not think St John rejected the Virgin-birth.

And, again, have you ever read the story of the water changed into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana, the first miracle Christ ever did according to St John? Does not this account presuppose the absolute confidence of Mary in the miraculous powers of her Son? Without it the story is meaningless jargon. But whence this calm confidence in the divine powers of her Child, so quietly presupposed by the Evangelist—after all, ordinary mothers do not usually ask their grown-up sons for miracles—unless she possessed the supreme proof of His divine origin in her own Virginal Maternity? Cana is not unnatural after Bethlehem, but without Bethlehem it is only a fairy story in which a fairy queen says: "Open Sesame," and the miracle happens. A year ago I heard a Hyde Park orator shout at the top of his

voice: "John the friend of Jesus and keeper of Mary knew nothing of a Virgin-birth!" and I marvelled not indeed at the ignorance of the son of Zebedee, but at the ignorance of the speaker, who did not know that the fourth Gospel was not likely to contain all John knew of Him, on whose breast He rested His head at the Last Supper. Well, let it be, certainly St Paul did not know! Are you quite certain that the opening verses of Romans: "The good news of God, which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who according to the Flesh became from the Seed of David, and who by His Resurrection was proved to be the Son of God in power according to the Holy Ghost,"—quite certain that they contain no echo of Gabriel's words to Mary: "He shall be called the Son of the Most High—God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. The Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"?

Are you quite certain that St Paul did not see in the Resurrection the final proof that Christ was indeed what He promised to be before His birth: the Son of God in power according to the Holy Ghost, a promise which made Zachary sing: "God raised up a horn of salvation to us in the house of David His servant as He spoke by the Holy Prophets from the beginning"?

Are you quite certain that St Paul knew nothing of the Gospel written or to be written by his friend and travelling companion, Luke? Are you quite certain that St Paul's "Second Adam," who broke the entail of the first Adam's sin, the curse on all

those begotten of him according to the flesh, quite certain that Paul thought Him begotten of man as every other child of Adam; quite certain that when Paul speaks of the first man as being of the earth, earthly, the Second Man "from heaven," he could not have referred to the fact that Adam was made "of the slime of the earth," but that Jesus was conceived from the Holy Ghost and the power of the Most High?

Are you quite certain that the reason why St Paul avoids again and again the ordinary expression for human birth of Jesus Christ, an expression which he himself naturally uses of the birth of Ishmael and Isaac, and uses instead a strange term: *become* of a woman, *become* of the Seed of David, *become* in the likeness of men, quite certain that the reason is *not* that he believes in a Virgin-birth? Quite certain that Paul's reason for saying: "God sent forth His Son, *become* of a woman" is not the same as John's for saying: "the Word *became* flesh . . . and we saw His glory as that of the Only-begotten of the Father," and that the choice of this term has nothing to do with a belief in the Virgin-birth?

Are you quite certain that the vision of the Woman clothed with the Sun, who brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all the nations, and whose son was taken up to God and to His Throne, could not possibly have been suggested by the thought of the Virgin-Mother of Christ? Then, we fear, this certainty is due more to preconceived ideas than to the force of the text of the New Testament or the historic attestations of Christ's first followers.

CHAPTER IV

HEROD, THE MAGI AND THE STAR

THE story of the Magi and of Herod massacring the Innocents at Bethlehem is sometimes set aside as a mixture of Bluebeard with a fairy story, which no grown-up person would take seriously. Even those who would allow that the Gospels are in the main historical still draw the line at such obvious legends as the Magi and their Star. The killing of all the baby boys is a tale gruesome enough to make children's flesh creep; and the beautiful Star resting over the crib and the mysterious Magi bringing romantic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, is just the thing for youthful minds susceptible to the wizardry of the East and marvels in the sky. But sober-minded people are too rudely awake to the world of fact still to believe in fairyland.

Quite so. None the less remember, facts are often stranger than fiction, and some things, says the proverb, are too strange not to be true. Who was the Herod who is said to have killed the babies at Bethlehem? He was an old man of seventy-three when Our Lord was born. We know his history well, he was one of the best-known figures of his time. Let me tell you his story. He was the Great Upstart in royalty of his days, the Great Parvenu in the Court of Kings. His grandfather was the son of a

slave, so the tale went, and, though Herod reigned over the Jews, he was no son of David, he was not even a son of Aaron, or a descendant of the priest-kings who had ruled since the Maccabees; nay, he was not even a Jew, but a convert to Judaism, who came from Edom, the national foe of Israel. He was foisted on the Jews by the hated Romans; he had taken Jerusalem by force of arms; he was always surrounded by a mercenary army, and reigned by the terror he inspired. But let us give the man his due, he was Herod THE GREAT in a sense. He reigned undisputed master over a large country for forty years. Prosperity and peace, culture and magnificent cities, marked the land of Palestine in his days. He made the Temple at Jerusalem one of the wonders of the world for grandeur and beauty, and he had built pagan temples, too, elsewhere when it suited him. Tranquillity reigned where he had power, for it was the irresistible power of the bloody despot. He was great in a sense, but it was a monstrous greatness. Our King Henry VIII. was but a pale reflection of Herod the Great.

Herod began his reign by a series of condemnations and executions of prominent noblemen amongst the Jews; with iron hand he kept down insurrection. He had married Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, the last of the Ashmonæans, priest-kings of Judea. Her brother, a lad of seventeen years, first was made High Priest by Herod, and then assassinated by his orders when in his bath. Five years later he had her old father assassinated, and then he put Mariamne herself to death; two years later he had her mother assassinated; three years later two young distant relatives of hers, and a

brother-in-law who had shielded the lads; whilst about twenty years later he put both the sons of Mariamne to death. Herod was married no less than ten times, but his married life was a troubled one. Only five days before his own death he had the eldest son of his first wife executed, the son whom not long before he had proclaimed heir to the throne.

As the massacre of the children at Bethlehem must have taken place at most a few months before, this gave rise to the anecdote preserved for us by a pagan writer, Macrobius (c. 410 A.D.). When Augustus, the Roman Emperor of the time, heard that amongst the boys under two, whom Herod, King of the Jews, had put to death in Syria, his own son was killed, he said: "It is better to be Herod's swine than Herod's son," for Herod affected strict observance of the Jewish food laws, and therefore, not eating pork, he would not slay swine, but slew his sons instead. However, the anecdote as told by this writer fails to take into account that the son whom Herod killed a few days before his own death was a man of middle age. The acts of bloodshed perpetrated within Herod's own family were accompanied by others amongst his subjects—terrible by reason of their numbers. Josephus, who was born but thirty years after Herod's death at Jerusalem, tells how he had ordered the nobles, whom he called to him in his last moments, to be executed immediately after his decease, so that at least his death might be accompanied by universal mourning. Herod in his last days, so we read, did not spare "those who seemed most dear to him," but "slew all those of his own family who, looking forward to a change in the

royal line, sided with the Pharisees in refusing to take the oath to the Roman Emperor."

The massacre at Bethlehem is a Bluebeard story, you say. But does anyone, who knows Herod's life, dare to say that the assassination of say twenty-five children—for there cannot possibly have been more baby boys under two in the small village of Bethlehem and its environs—would have caused qualms of conscience in the crazy old tyrant? If a set of distinguished foreigners came to Jerusalem and spoke about some royal prince whose birth they had read in the stars, and if the groaning people, who were yearning for the old king's death, and who rose in bloody revolution the moment almost that the breath was out of his body; if these people made this the subject of eager though subdued gossip, what else could Herod think but that this was some new scheme to tear the sceptre from his hands before he was dead? Herod struck blindly right and left; he had at least three of his own sons assassinated within four years of the first Christmas, and he threatened to have all the nobles of Jerusalem murdered at his death. Now this supposed Messias-Child, said to be miraculously pointed out at Bethlehem, was but another attempt "to change the royal line." What else could have suggested itself to his maddened brain but the common procedure of assassination? A score of babies more to the bloody list of his crimes, what did it matter? He had now set his mind on making his son Archelaus succeed him, but, no doubt, half foresaw what would happen. Within a few months the misrule and cruelty of Archelaus, who started his rule by a ruthless massacre of Jews, had driven the Jews to ask protection from the

Romans, who deposed him, made Judea a Roman Province, and ended the dynastic ambitions of Herod the Great. He felt, he almost knew, this was coming ; what wonder that he drowned his fears in blood ?

But Jerusalem was a cultured city, you say, and Judea a highly civilized country. No doubt it was—as civilized as Petrograd under Lenin and Trotsky. And who were the Magi ? Wizards of a fairy tale ? Magicians with their famous wands ? Thus it might appear to someone who knows nothing of contemporary history. They were members of the priestly caste of the Persian Empire, as well known in their own country of that day as Anglican clergymen are known in the British Empire of this day, and by no means unknown and unrespected in the rival Empire of Rome. They could look back on centuries of magnificent history, when they and the Persian kings guided the destinies of their vast countries. They were almost immeasurably superior to the crude idolatrous priesthoods of Egypt, Greece, Asia, or Rome, for they adored the One Good God, the Lord and Maker of the world. It is true they had not reached the pure and absolute monotheism of the Jews, for they believed this Good God had still to struggle with an almost equal god of darkness, but their religion was the highest that the human mind ever achieved unaided by revelation. Their visit to Jerusalem and reception by King Herod are no more improbable than the visit of the Bishop of London to Paris and his reception by Poincaré. When King Tiridates of Armenia went to Rome to be crowned some seventy years later he was surrounded by Magi, who created an immense impression on the Roman people ; and Nero the Emperor held a banquet in

honour of the Magi and endeavoured to learn their secret lore. A few years before, Seneca, in a letter to Lucilius, refers to the Magi at Athens who offered a sacrifice to the spirit of Plato, the great philosopher. If Magi, or Mazdean priests, were at Rome and at Athens, why should they not go to Jerusalem? If Nero received them in great state, why should not Herod?

Well, granted, you say, a visit of the Magi to Herod is not improbable; it is the reason of their visit we cannot understand. What more wildly improbable than that they should be drawn by a star to come and adore a new-born babe at Jerusalem? Not so improbable, if you knew what people thought and dreamt of in those days. But probable or improbable, it is a FACT, and an ounce of fact is worth more than ever so great a weight of theory. It is a FACT that in those years there was a widespread expectation of the coming of a Saviour. The Jews, of course, were waiting for their Messiah year by year: the unrest and frenzy of their expectations led to the war of their final destruction in 70 A.D. Somehow this looking for someone to come had spread far beyond Palestine. Tacitus speaks of it, Suetonius speaks of it, people from the East, so it was said, would be masters of the world. People looked for "Salvation." Horace, in his sixteenth Epode, written about 30 B.C., utters a cry of despair that the Roman world is lost, people had better migrate to the mysterious islands of the Western Ocean, where a Golden Age would be reopened them. But Virgil answers these despondent verses in his fourth Eclogue in words referring to a New-born Child in whom all the hopes of the world are centred. The words are so strangely

reminiscent of those referring to the Messiah in the Prophet Isaías that many scholars hold that the Prince of Latin Poets had read the Prince of Hebrew Prophets. It is a fact that, through the Sibylline Oracles, Hebrew prophecies and Hebrew hopes were widely known outside Palestine. The Hebrew Scriptures had been translated more than two hundred years before into the Greek language understood throughout the East.

And could not the Magi know of the Jewish Prophecy in the Book of Numbers: "A Star shall arise out of Jacob"? Jews in vast numbers had lived in Persia for at least five hundred years. They were almost as numerous in the lands along the Euphrates and the Tigris as they were in Palestine. The Magi, who gathered their lore from the Sacred Books of the Chaldeans, as well as their own, were likely to be students of the Sacred Books of the Jews. Is not the Mandeian religion, with its beautiful doctrine of the Light-King, akin to some sublime passages in the Jewish Psalms? The Magi were the astronomers and, let us concede it, also the astrologers of their day. Astronomy was born on the Babylonian plains.

These Magi lived in a country in which a Jewish population had settled for over five hundred years—where, in fact, there were probably more Jews than in Palestine itself, where every town of importance had its "East End," as we have now in London. When Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed the Jews to return to their own country after his conquest of Babylon in 528 B.C., a goodly number indeed returned to Zion, and repopulated their devastated Fatherland; but more, I should think, remained. Then, as

now, they thought of Zionism as an ideal but not a practical matter. They developed in the land of their exile a great literary activity, and their Babylonian Talmud was as famous as the Talmud of Jerusalem. If these Mazdean priests had nothing about a King to come among the Jews in their ancient books, a point which has not yet been definitely ascertained, they may well have joined some expectation of their own with the more precise expectation of Israel, which was waiting for the rising of the Star out of Jacob. The convert world of Judaism was much more widespread than historians at first believed, and these Mazdeans may well have been worshippers of the Most High God, "Hypsistarians" as the Greeks called them, without being full converts to the Jewish faith.

But, you may object, that after all I have not touched on the real miracle of the Epiphania, the appearance and movement of the Star which the Magi saw. Surely, you say, I cannot succeed in explaining away the miraculous character of that part of the story as I have tried to do with the other part. But I protest that I have not explained away the miraculous element in the coming of the Magi. It is miraculous enough. But even miracles are prepared for, even miracles happen in circumstances ordered by God's Providence and amongst people who are first rendered suitable instruments for the display of God's power. If God worked a miracle in the minds of the Magi, it was not so incongruous and weird a marvel, without rhyme or reason, as modern critics would fain have us believe.

And the Star? Would not the whole astral system have been disturbed if a star travelled across the sky

to guide the steps of travellers from Persia to Palestine? Well, the Maker of the starry skies has them sufficiently under control, I fancy, to allow for a special star travelling across the boundless space above. But does the Scripture text say that the Star travelled visibly across the sky? If it does, that is the end of the matter; for God nothing is difficult or impossible. But does it? Had we not better read "the fairy story" over carefully before we smile at it? The Magi came to Jerusalem saying: "We have seen His Star in the East, and we have come to adore Him." Not a word about a star travelling visible across the sky before them. Still, they call it *His* Star! Quite so, some luminous body in the sky, which they knew was the harbinger of the coming of the King of the Jews. How they knew it, the Gospel does not say. Through Sacred Book or Sacred Oracle, through direct or indirect revelation, they knew; let that suffice.

On the night of 17th December 1919 there was a marvellous conjunction of stars causing a brilliance which would have been the wonder of any astronomer gazing at it in a clear sky. Cannot what happened on 17th December 1919, have happened in the year Christ was born? Yes, you say, but did it happen? In answer be it said that we have the testimony of the people best qualified to judge, namely, the astronomers, that it DID. Astral phenomena are rarely of such a character that the man in the street may discover them. Experts alone can discern and describe them, and the public learn of them through the Press. Persia at that date had no *Times* newspaper to inform the citizens of Susa, Ecbatana, or Babel. But, you argue, if remarkable astral pheno-

mena appeared at that time, surely astronomers of to-day can calculate backward and tell us that such a thing happened in the year Christ was born? I am not so sure. Astronomers are usually modest enough to acknowledge that no one can dogmatize as to what astral phenomena were visible in Hither-Asia two thousand years ago. Even the firmament has its surprises, and those even for astronomers. Recently Professor Einstein surprised the learned world with a discovery, which was called by some a revolution in the scientific world. Certainly his findings gave occasion for scientific humility when he discourses of warped space and a whole universe awry, of bent rays of light, and of light under the influence of gravity, and of stars actually situated where, scientifically speaking, they could not be.

Be that as it may, surely, you say, it is impossible that the Star rested over the cave where the child was, having gone before the Magi on the road to Bethlehem! Nothing is impossible with God. As a matter of fact, the text of St Matthew does not force us to admit of a star indicating by its movement the road to Bethlehem. The Magi did not need the Star to guide them. They had just heard that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, and the road to Bethlehem was a main road which everyone knew. Having observed this remarkable constellation in their own country, and learning that this new Star, as it appeared to them, was a token of the new-born Jewish Messiah, they went on their pilgrimage. Whether they saw the Star while travelling from Persia to Palestine all the time is neither said nor implied; rather the contrary, for some time at least before they arrived the Star was not visible to them.

Otherwise, surely, when before Herod and the priests, they would have pointed to the Star overhead, and not have said "We have seen His Star in the East," nor would St Matthew have laid such stress on their joy at seeing the Star again after leaving Herod.

When at Bethlehem they were indeed at a loss where to turn to find the birthplace of the new-born King. They might have asked the inhabitants as they had asked at Jerusalem, but that they clearly did not do. Had they done so, there would have been no need for their secret departure to hide the fact of their having found the Babe from Herod. The Bethlehemites surely would have given the information which would have saved their own children. There, no doubt, God used the Star to indicate the place where they found the Child and His Mother. How, we do not know precisely. St Matthew says: "Behold the Star, which they had seen in the East had preceded them (or, preceded them) until, going (or, in its course) it stood over where the Child was." Perhaps the Star in its course, for stars rise and set and travel across the sky as the sun does, reached the skyline over the rocks in which the cave was hewn, or, in some other wonderful way, indicated to the happy beholders the place where the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us.

He who called all stars out of the deep and called them by their names, and calling them created them out of nothing; He who needed but to say "Let there be light and there was light," wished that the heavens should proclaim the glory of God on the birthday on earth of His Only-begotten Son, who in His Godhead had been born before the world was made.

NOTES

1. The opinion that the guiding Star was a subjective phenomenon is not unorthodox. The Church has infallibly pronounced on the meaning of but few texts, and the account of the Magi is not amongst them. We have therefore not the infallible interpretation of the Church, but only the plain meaning of the words themselves to guide us. The plain meaning of the words seems to demand an objective phenomenon of some kind. What precisely this phenomenon was it is difficult to know. Whether it was caused by some new physical body in the firmament, or whether light rays from existing bodies were so reflected, or combined, or bent, as to create a light, some phenomenon in the sky, is a matter of indifference, but the text seems to me absolutely to demand an objective reality outside the mind of the Magi. If no visual image was made on the retina of their eyes by an outside agent, but the Magi "saw" the Star only as a man in a trance imagines he sees things, the story as actually told by St Matthew rings untrue. We would have the simultaneous hallucinations of several men—and that repeated at least three times: first, when they saw the Star in the East (or at its rising); secondly after their visit to Herod; thirdly, when they fancied its "standing over where the Child was." Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the Star which appeared to them. They must have given a consistent report about the Star to carry conviction to Herod's mind; it rings untrue to say that they were only discussing their hallucinations. The Evangelist indicates that he himself believes in the objectivity of the phenomenon. "Behold the Star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was." And then St Matthew continues, as it were dis-

tinguishing the objective reality of the phenomenon from their subjective perception of it: "And seeing the Star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." The absence of record would be an argument for the mere subjectivity of the phenomenon only if we possessed a carefully kept register of astronomical observations for the years in question, and if in this register all allusion to the celestial appearance to the Magi were missing. As we possess no such record, the argument seems to me without basis. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B.C. is not on record either, it is merely a calculation of Kepler's. Moreover, this conjunction was merely a natural phenomenon, which the Magi, on this supposition, would have mistaken for the sign of the new-born King.

2. The remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn which occurred in May of the year 7 B.C., to quote A. M. Clarke in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, is inadequate to fulfil the requirements of the Gospel narrative. I did not go through the arguments for its inadequacy when writing, but I did so in past years, and the memory of its inadequacy was so firmly impressed on my mind that, after some moments' hesitation, I decided to omit an explanation which I could not think sound myself.

3. Conscious of my weakness in Science, I abstained from any astronomical surmises, I clung to the interpretation of the Scripture text without losing myself in fields of which I know so little. My astronomical ignorance was an additional reason why I omitted any reference to the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn—it is so easy to make a slip when writing about matters with which one is not familiar. Of Einstein's theory I know very little. From this I think it safe to infer that astronomy cannot dogmatize as to what phenomena were visible in the sky in Hither-Asia, two thousand years ago, on an uncertain date of year, month and day. I also said:

"Cannot what happened on 17th December 1919, have happened in the year Christ was born?" Nothing, however, was further from my mind than to suggest that the Star of the Magi represented the same astronomical occurrence as that of 1919. Knowing of the Jupiter-Saturn explanation when but two planets were in conjunction, I thought it better to take a recent instance, in everyone's mind, when many more planets were in conjunction. My purpose was merely to convey that God need not have created any new heavenly body, He might have used the existing planets or stars to bring about a light-phenomenon in the sky. I do not really think it was a NEW star—it only appeared so to them. Scripture talks of scientific matters in a simple sort of way, and any unusual speck of light in the sky would naturally be described as "a star." But this "Star" would be an objective, not a subjective, phenomenon.

If apologetics is to carry conviction it must get rid of dubious science; that is why, knowing only the barest rudiments of astronomy, I confined myself strictly to exegesis.

CHAPTER V

PONTIUS PILATE

THE ease with which some people set aside the Gospel story as a fairy tale is undoubtedly due in large measure to their ignorance of general history at the beginning of our era. "Two thousand years ago!" they say to themselves, "what happened then *must* be dim and obscure and doubtful; it *must* be, for it is so long ago!"

Christianity was born at the very noonday of history; at the height of classical culture and civilization. The world of those days is known even in minute details. We possess an army of contemporary writers, a veritable library of contemporary, or practically contemporary, documents, a wealth of sculptures and inscriptions illustrating the faces and features of the great personages of those days as a mere walk through the British Museum will show. We have descriptions of that ancient world even from a gay and jocular standpoint in Lucan, Persius, Petronius, Catullus, Juvenal, Martial and Horace. The extant literature, Greek, Roman and Oriental, written within a hundred years before and a hundred years after the birth of Christ, is so voluminous that there are few persons living who could boast of having read it all. But of all this the ordinary man, even the educated man—except of course he be a classicist or

ancient historian by profession—knows little. Hence the thousand fibres by which the Gospel story is attached to contemporary history are not seen or realized. It is not grasped how monstrous is the improbability of the Gospels being a late forgery, pretending to give a history which in reality would only be the fiction of people living in a later age. Hence, in defence of the Gospels we intend to give little sketches of persons, places and things connected with New Testament history and to portray them as the living realities they once were.

Let us begin with Pontius Pilate.

In English we might give his name and style as Sir Bridger Spearman, Kt. The Bridgers, or Pontius family, had a most honourable history. We can trace them back to some four hundred years before Christ. Again and again they play a prominent part in the history of Italy. Originally they were not Roman, in the strictest sense of the word ; they were Samnite—just as we might say that a certain family are not Londoners, but Norfolk people. In ancient days the people of Samnium had many a battle with the people of Latium and the Romans proper : but all that was ancient history even at the beginning of our era. The Samnite nobles had their share in the honours of the Great Capital. True, the Pontii did not belong quite to the highest nobility, or Patricians, they could not as yet boast of the Consulate, or as we would say, of a ducal coronet or marquissate, but their knighthood was a sound old title of which they might well be proud. Moreover, even then there were knights and knights: they were not parvenus, but were clearly in the upper inner circle of the ruling aristocracy, the Equites Cæsarini, the

immediate entourage of the Emperor, the familiars or *amici Cæsaris*—a quasi-official title introduced not long before, which later on give rise to the designation *comites*, counts, or companions of the Sovereign.

When the crowd shouted to Pilate: "If you release Him you are not a friend of Cæsar," this cry had a peculiar significance for Pilate's ears. Technically he was *amicus Cæsaris*, "a friend of Cæsar," but ever since the snub he received from Tiberius, about which later, there must have been a ring of sarcasm in that title.

He married Claudia Procula, a lady from the South of France, as is often supposed. Tiberius was born in Lyons, and possibly the Emperor had arranged a marriage for his noble officer, as he had intended a Claudius for a daughter of his favourite Sejanus. The Claudian family was so large, some of them titled, some only country gentry, that a distant poor relation might well have been the wife of this promising officer. Her name Procula, in its masculine form Proculus, occurs as that of a Consul about this time. Names were chosen, not at haphazard, but with the utmost care in those circles in those days—there may well be a family connection between the Consul and Procula. By the way, Romans had three names, and Pilate's first name, the prenomen, something not unlike our Christian name, is not known. People talked about Pilate as we talk about Churchill, Henderson, Asquith, and omitted their other names, and so forgot them.

On his appointment as Governor of Judea, he had taken his wife with him to the Colonies, for Judea was a Crown Colony directly dependent on the Emperor. A generation before it would have been

difficult for him to do so. The Home Government did not want its officers burdened with the presence of their wives, but in more recent years the authorities of the Mother country had grown more lenient, and it had ceased to create surprise if the lady went with her husband. The rank and file of the army were not supposed to be married, and there were certainly no married quarters in connection with a Roman camp, or barracks. However, higher officers were privileged persons. Not only was the lady with Pilate at his headquarters, but we know that she accompanied him to Jerusalem. No doubt she had a special interest in that city. Early tradition has it that she was a prospective Jewish convert, and nothing is more likely. The number of high-born ladies who took to the Jewish religion was astonishing, and a ribald writer of those days remarked that "if you wanted to see the beauties of the town you had better stand at the door of the Synagogue when service was over."

The couple must have arrived there in 26 A.D. Cæsarea was a new city, some forty years old, but already the chief city of Palestine. Herod had built it, and created the seaport. The town was more Gentile than Jewish and possessed all the charm and facilities of an up-to-date resort—a vast theatre, a race-course, a huge temple to Rome and Augustus, and noble streets with endless colonnades. Pilate and his wife lived in the former Palace of Herod, a gigantic structure overlooking the sea, and perched on a rock surrounded on three sides by the waves, a most romantic place of which the ruins are still visible. Pilate's was a busy life. He was head of the military, fiscal and judiciary departments. A

company of three thousand soldiers was always stationed at Cæsarea, and there were a great number of scattered detachments all over the country. True, they were not Roman legionaries proper—at least not in Pilate's time—they were native levies, or "auxiliaries," consisting of the local population, mostly Samaritans I believe, but not Jews, with a sprinkling of volunteers from everywhere. However, they were trained in Roman fashion, and formed a well-disciplined force. In fact their term of service was twenty-five years, five years longer than in the regular army. However romantic Cæsarea may have been, Pilate's task was a prosaic and difficult one.

His province consisted of two districts, bitterly hostile to one another, and he was there to keep the peace. The Samaritans, half-Jews of the North, kept up a bitter feud, almost a guerrilla warfare with the Judeans. Once, for instance, to the horror of the people in Jerusalem, Samaritans actually scattered a dead man's bones in the Temple on the day before the Pasch, by this sacrilege rendering the Great Temple unclean, and preventing the Jews from using it on the High Festival of the year. When some Galileans came to the Passover through Samaria the inhabitants massacred them, and then the Judeans sacked a few Samaritan villages in return. Samaria was the Ulster in Pilate's Ireland, and really caused his recall. Either party constantly appealed to Rome, and one never knew whether the Home Government might not reverse the Governor's decisions.

Matters were hopelessly complicated. There was a native administration in civil, and to a certain extent, in criminal matters. Pilate was not supposed

to interfere in this administration. He was there to see the peace was kept and the Imperial taxes paid, and he was absolute master of the military forces in the country. Furthermore there was a language difficulty. The official language of the Home Government was, of course, Latin ; the bulk of the people at Cæsarea spoke Greek ; but the strictly native population spoke Aramaic, though many must have known a phrase or two in Greek. Did Pilate ever learn the native tongue ? Possibly, but it is not likely, though possibly he learnt enough to give an order to the servants. A Provincial Governor usually stayed about three or four years, though Pilate's predecessor had remained on for ten years : there were fourteen Governors in Judea during sixty years. It was only a stepping-stone to higher preferment. Then Pilate's position was difficult because somewhat ambiguous. He was Epitropos or Procurator of Judea, appointed not by the Senate, but by the Emperor as his representative in a Crown Colony. Yet he was not a mere surveyor of Imperial Revenue, nor a mere army man ; he had the title Hegemon or President, and had the *jus gladii*, or power of life and death. He was a sort of Proconsul, yet subordinate to the Legate or Viceroy of Syria, who might interfere and call him to account, though apparently not dismiss him.

Above all things there was the religious difficulty. The Jews were fanatically superstitious, so no doubt thought Pilate, and one never knew when one hurt their susceptibilities. Other native races of course had their peculiar religious rites, but they did not create much trouble. The policy of the Home Government was to leave native religions severely alone.

The cult of Rome and Augustus was merely superimposed. Tolerance all round, within reason of course, was Rome's watchword. Jewish practices and prejudices, however, were so weird and unreasonable that they would drive the most sensible foreigner out of his senses. To make matters worse, it was not merely the actual Jewish population of Palestine with whom he had to deal. There were more Jews outside Palestine than in. Well-nigh a million came in pilgrimage to their holy land every year. These Jews outside Palestine had immense influence. They were the traders and the bankers of the Empire. Were the Governor to do anything wrong at Jerusalem, all the Jewish world would be agog and backstairs intrigue at Rome itself might ruin him. A Jewish prince, Agrippa, son of Herod the Great, had power at Capreæ—the Windsor of those days—he was the bosom-friend of Caius, the heir-apparent. Another Jewish prince, and son of the same Herod, was the native potentate of the province adjoining Pilate's own, and was naturally regarded as the royal patron of the religious authorities at Jerusalem. Friction was absolutely bound to occur between these two, Pilate and Antipas, and it did.

Finally, there was the worthy called the 'High Priest.' For over a hundred years the Ashmonæan family had ruled as Priest-Kings over the country; they had been a great power, but Herod had made an end of them, having murdered the last descendant of the Maccabees in his bath. Ever since High Priests had succeeded one another in rapid succession. Pilate's own predecessor had appointed no less than four in the short ten years he had ruled, but Pilate left well alone, and kept Joseph Caiaphas in function

during the whole of his governorship. Moreover, I suspect that the Viceroy of Syria had a say in the appointment of so important a personage. The High Priest and his council, or Sanhedrin, were still a factor to be reckoned with, and it was natural that Pilate would shrink from putting his hand into a hornet's nest. But worst of all was the absurd anxiety of the Home Government to avoid disturbances in the provinces; almost any make-shift was held preferable to hurting native prejudices. However, Sejanus, the Jew-baiter, was in power at the Court of Tiberius at the time of Pilate's appointment, and we may well forgive Pilate if he thought that he was expected by that clique to rule the Jews with a firm hand. Yet favourites fall and reactions follow. Moreover, it is a different thing to bait a small Jewish colony of about twenty thousand at Rome and to disturb a whole province.

At the very outset of his career Pilate had to suffer a bitter humiliation. His predecessors, knowing Jewish scruples about images and other signs of idolatry of any kind, had carefully removed such from the military ensigns of the troops stationed at Jerusalem. Pilate, clearly not from sheer ignorance (otherwise he would not have taken the precaution of making the troops enter after sunset), but because he thought it an outrage to the Majesty of Rome to tamper with its military standards and fawn upon any colonials, and because like the Sejanus party he had a contempt and loathing for Jews, made his men carry all their paraphernalia to their Jerusalem barracks. Next morning the Jews realized what had happened and the Holy City trembled with indignation at the sacrilege. They set out in vast crowds

for Cæsarea, the Governor's residence, and as the multitudinous deputation arrived at his residence it had swollen to many thousands. The Governor had them directed to the great race-course, where he surrounded them by his troops, and threatened to massacre them all unless they desisted from their opposition. To his amazement and annoyance they threw themselves on the ground and bared their necks, shouting that they were ready to die if only he would remove the obnoxious images. Unless he wanted to begin his administration with a scene of wildest bloodshed, there was no way out but to have the medallions on the standards in Jerusalem removed, which he accordingly did. It was a humiliating position; but he ought to have known better than act as he did. Why, even the Roman mint in Palestine refrained from issuing brass coins with Cæsar's image on them out of respect for Jewish scruples; the silver and gold coins which had on them a bust of the Emperor were minted elsewhere. I dare say that Jewish scrupulosity stretched a point in handling them. Thus Pilate learnt the first Commandment of the Jewish Decalogue to his shame and cost. No graven images in Jerusalem!

Some time later, in his loyalty as a Roman officer and in homage to his Imperial Master, he thought of hanging up in his own residence at Jerusalem the Castle Antonia, some gilded shields dedicated to Tiberius Cæsar. They were without brass reliefs or imagery of any kind displaying only an inscription, and that, of course, not in the native tongue, but probably in Latin, possibly in Greek. To his incredible annoyance the Jews objected; they considered the wording idolatrous! There was no doubt some-

thing about *DIVO CÆSARI*, "the divine Cæsar" in the inscription. But there was a whole temple dedicated to Rome and *AUGUSTUS* in Cæsarea! Yes, Cæsarea, but Cæsarea was a Gentile town of yesterday, Jerusalem the Holy City of Jewry since David's time, a millennium ago. Pilate's embarrassment was great. To remove the shields would be an almost personal insult to the Emperor. It was sheer Jewish perversity. The four sons of the late Herod backed up the popular cry. They wished to humiliate him. If they wanted to appeal to the Home Government, well, let them! The Home Government would back him up! They went. They saw the Emperor, who on the very day of receiving the deputation wrote to Pilate a stiff and peremptory note to have the shields removed from Jerusalem and put up at Cæsarea.

Not long afterwards Pilate had a great scheme for the Capital. The one great need for an Oriental town was an abundant supply of wholesome water. Roman engineering had covered Italy and the provinces with gigantic aqueducts, which are wonders of architecture, and of which the remains still compel our admiration. If Pilate could mark his administration by an aqueduct worthy of Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish world, he would have done something to perpetuate his name. This aqueduct was to be at least twenty miles long. It was to be a costly undertaking. Where was he to get the money from? There was the Temple treasury. Money stored up uselessly. He was at the head of the provincial finances: why should he not use it? After all it was for the good of the Jews themselves. The mob got to hear of it, and there were fearful disturbances.

This time Pilate refused to submit to mob rule. He ordered his police to scatter the multitude with truncheons and clubs. Blood flowed and many fatal casualties were the result. However, the scheme was dropped and Jerusalem never got its aqueduct. The Jews had their suspicions that the money would, at least to a large extent, find its way into Pilate's pockets. Colonial officials usually returned home richer than they went. Tiberius is credited with the coarse remark in answer to the question why he did not remove some provincial officers sooner: "When the horseflies once have settled on dung, it is unadvisable to disturb them." We have no proof, however, that Pilate was worse than the others.

But he could be ruthless and harsh. St Luke chances to give an instance. People came to tell Jesus of the Galileans, whose very blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and Jesus answered: "Do you think that these Galileans were sinners above all others because they suffered these things? I tell you, No!" We know no further details of this incident. We know the Galileans had the reputation of being hardened fanatics for Mosaic Law. If their very sacrifices were bespattered with their blood it must have occurred within the very Temple precincts. The fortress Antonia, which Pilate used as his residence in Jerusalem, overlooked the very Temple courts. The Temple square was enclosed by a low wall which at given distances had an inscription in Greek threatening death to any unauthorized, any alien, person who crossed that barrier. Some years ago one of those inscriptions was actually unearthed. Possibly some Gentiles or hated Samaritans had disobeyed, a fierce fight had ensued, and Pilate's men

had not "restored order" before the blood of these zealots covered the very victims they brought for sacrifice.

As a matter of fact we have a sketch of Pilate's character by a contemporary, but it is perhaps hardly fair to judge him by it. It is the estimate of his notorious enemies. It occurs in a letter of Agrippa to Caius embodied in Philo's account of his embassy to this madman Emperor. The Jews were embittered beyond measure, for this Imperial maniac wanted to set up his own statue in the Temple on Mount Zion, to be worshipped as a god. In the list of their grievances there occur these words about Pilate: "obstinate of character, harsh and arrogant," he is supposed to be guilty of "bribery, violence, robbery, hard treatment, vexatious behaviour, continual executions without previous trial, cruelties without number, too many to be borne." This accusation was only made after Tiberius's death and after Pilate's fall. Tiberius left Pilate ten years in office, which is hardly conceivable if his administration had not some redeeming features. However, the end came at last, and that strange to say through the Samaritans, not the Jews. For the former, Mount Garizim was the Sacred Mount near Sichem where they worshipped, as the woman of Samaria told Our Lord. About six years after Christ's death a pseudo-prophet promised to show the credulous mob the sacred vessels which Moses was supposed to have buried there before his death. In their hundreds the people had gathered at the foot of that broad, imposing hill preparatory to ascending it to witness some divine manifestation. But Pilate forestalled them. His soldiery set on them and a pitiless massacre followed. The friends

and the relatives of the slain went to Vitellius, the Viceroy of Syria, to pour out their bitter complaints. He listened to them and took their side. He suspended Pilate from his office, and sent him to Rome to give an account of his stewardship and meet his accusers. Meanwhile a *locum tenens* was appointed in Judea. This must have been in January 36 A.D. Pilate at last had to meet his terrible earthly master and the charge of not being "the friend of Cæsar." But before Pilate arrived at Capreæ, Tiberius had died on 28th March of the same year.

Had Pilate ever sent Tiberius a report about the condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth? Most likely. We know that a few years later Petronius, the Viceroy of Syria, sent his report to the successor of Tiberius about matters in his province. Pliny, in later years, sent his report about Bithynia to Trajan. That the Home Government was regularly and systematically informed about provincial affairs there can be no doubt. St Justin, a man born in Samaria about 100 A.D., appeals in his Open Letter to the Emperors of the day, when speaking about the Crucifixion, to the fact that they "can ascertain this from the Acts of what happened under Pontius Pilate." Tertullian in his "Apology for Christianity" also states that "Pilate informed Tiberius Cæsar about all this." Moreover, as Antipas, the Ruler of Galilee happened to be mixed up with the incident, and sent back Jesus to Pilate as "not guilty," and as the Galilean Prophet clearly had a large and determined following, which, for all Pilate knew, might take steps to avenge their leader, a reference of Pilate to Christ in his report to the Emperor is extremely likely. Unfortunately all the extant so-called Letters and Acts

are pious fabrications. The Government itself complicated matters by issuing fraudulent Acts of Pilate in 311 or 312 A.D. to justify its ferocity in persecuting the Christians. This Government version of the Acts was publicly advertised in every town and hamlet, prescribed as a text-book in the schools, and had even to be learnt by heart by the school children! Some of the legendary Acts are early, some late, even as late as the fifth century. The so-called letter of Pilate to Claudius may go back to the second century. Whether anything in it is based on fact we shall probably never know. The astonishingly lenient verdict of many early Christians and Tertullian's "Pilate himself in conscience a Christian," may be the echo of genuine tradition, or merely an amplification of Christ's own words: "Those who delivered Me to thee, have the greater guilt." No one can say.

When sent in disgrace to Rome in 36 A.D. he simply disappears from secular history. Eusebius, usually a sober and careful historian, born in Palestine in 265, states that he died by his own hand, after having been banished to Gaul by Caius. Origen, born in 185 A.D., states as a simple fact that Pilate's wife became a Christian, and we have no reason whatever to doubt it. It is most natural to suppose that St Matthew's information in chap. xxviii. 19: "While he (Pilate) was in his tribunal his wife sent word to him: 'Have nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered much in a dream on account of Him,'" came from the illustrious lady herself. Possibly St Paul mentioned her in his letter to Timothy, but the lady there mentioned is more likely to have been Pudens's wife, about whom that

scurrilous Spaniard Martial made his squib some years later.

The Christian wife may have secured pity for her pagan husband in the earliest Christian community, and though we may not go as far as the Ethiopians, who put Pilate in the Calendar, we may surely hope that Pilate's feeble attempts to save Jesus from the fury of the Jews were rewarded by Christ's saving him from eternal damnation.

CHAPTER VI

CAIAPHAS

THE High Priesthood at Jerusalem had sunk to the deepest depths of degradation. The old High Priest, Onias III., a man of noble character, had been foully done to death by pagans, in a foreign town, at the instigation of a schemer for the High Priesthood. His own brother had intrigued against him, and by gigantic bribery had supplanted him at Jerusalem, and now this same brother had been ousted in his turn by a man called Menelaus, who had offered no less than three hundred talents of silver to King Antiochus for the post. Always in need of money the King had sold the High Priesthood twice within four years.

A report got abroad that the King was dead, whereupon the one who had bought the High Priesthood first re-entered Jerusalem with a thousand men, but the second buyer maintained himself in the citadel, and torrents of human blood dyed the streets of the Holy City. The second buyer at last got the upper hand and the first buyer wandered through Eastern lands, half vagabond, half brigand, until he died, detested, in far-away Lacedæmon.

His successful rival maintained himself a few years until he too was assassinated. Then a certain Alcimus obtained the Pontificate from Demetrius,

the murderer of Antiochus V., and installed himself at Jerusalem after an appalling massacre of Jews. He managed to hold on for two or three years, when he died a sudden death in 160 B.C. Jason, Menelaus, and Alcimus had been utterly shameless in their overt rejection of the Jewish faith and adoption of pagan manners and rites. Jason had even sent offerings for a sacrifice to the god Melkarth of Tyre, and they all assisted the Greek tyrants in abolishing the rite of circumcision.

The son of Onias III. set up a Jewish temple in Egypt, where he and his successors maintained Jewish worship for three hundred years, but in Jerusalem itself God raised up the mighty Maccabees, those warriors and Priest-Kings of Israel, who raised the High Priesthood to dignity for a hundred years. But then, again, corruption overtook that once heroic family of the Asmonæans. The High Priest, Aristobulus I., murdered his mother and one of his brothers—his other brother Alexander Jannæus may have been a clever army man but was hardly a priest. Hyrcanus, as a young man, was High Priest only, while his mother, Queen Alexandra, was Queen-regnant, after which he became Priest-King himself, till his brother forced him to abdicate. This squabble between the two brothers brought the foreigner into Jerusalem, and the Roman General, Pompey, in 60 B.C. took the Holy City, and mockingly entered the Holy of Holies. Hyrcanus then ruled for seventeen years until he had his ears cut off by his nephew Antigonus, who usurped the Pontificate and wanted by this mutilation to render his old uncle unfit ever to exercise the High Priesthood again. The old man was finally assassinated by Herod the

Great, who some years later had Aristobulus III., a mere lad of eighteen, drowned while he was bathing. To see the young man in his high-priestly vestments officiating in the Temple had so roused the popular enthusiasm that Herod thought it better to get rid of a possible future rival. That was the end of the Maccabees.

During the remaining hundred years, before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the High Priesthood was no longer regarded as a life appointment. The High Priests were simply set up and deposed at will by the secular authorities, whether Herodians or Roman Governors. Some twenty-five High Priests were thus instituted during this short century, while during the Siege of Jerusalem the mob appointed Phannias, an ignorant peasant, almost in mockery of the office. If we except Joseph Caiaphas, who ruled eighteen, and Ananias who ruled twelve years, the remaining ones were in office only a few years, some only a few months. Aaron's Mitre had become a crown of ignominy.

Though the office was no longer hereditary, the candidates were as a matter of fact chosen from about five families of the priestly aristocracy. How these particular families came to possess these privileges we do not precisely know. I fancy they were just the Cecils and Churchills of that day. In some cases, however, the occasion of their rise is not far to seek. The Boethus family gave no less than five High Priests to Israel: the father, three sons, a grandson, and probably also a son-in-law, for Joshua ben Gamaliel is said to have married Martha Boethus's daughter. They came into prominence because Herod the Great married Mariamne, the grand-

daughter of Boëthus of Alexandria, whose son Simon was an ordinary priest in Jerusalem. Herod heard this damsel praised for her marvellous beauty, and became desirous to marry her. To marry the daughter of a simple priest he thought somewhat undignified, hence he raised her father first to the High Priesthood, after having deposed the High Priest in office.

The Annas family, which gave no less than seven High Priests to Israel—the old man, five sons in succession, and a son-in-law, Joseph, with the surname Caiaphas—was prodigiously wealthy, the Rothschilds of Palestine. At least in two instances deposed High Priests, re-entered into office when their luck returned. The whole thing was clearly a matter of shameful jobbery.

Joseph Caiaphas was the Procurator's fourth appointment of a High Priest after the deposition of three predecessors, within the eleven years of his Procuratorship. When Pontius Pilate succeeded him, he kept this Joseph as High Priest for ten years, but the Roman Legate Vitellius deposed him after a Pontificate of sixteen years. This cannot be due to the mere complaisance of Pontius Pilate. Joseph was evidently a Vicar of Bray, determined to cling to office whatever happened. During all the troubles of the Jews with Pilate, Caiaphas is never mentioned. Had he joined with his people in any protest, it would certainly have been recorded. The Herods fell out with Pilate because they possessed some independence and some regard for Jewish interests. Caiaphas remained dumb because he was a mere creature of the Governor. Moreover, we read that Vitellius finally deposed Caiaphas to please the

people. The people therefore had clamoured for his deposition, and their own High Priests must have become utterly intolerable before they appealed to a pagan to get rid of him.

Scholars have discussed the meaning of the curious surname, or nickname, Caiaphas, but the question has not been settled. The meaning "Belcher" has been suggested, and Joseph the "Belcher" would not be an impossible nickname in an age when such nicknames abounded as Ptolemy, "Fat-paunch" of Egypt. The few words recorded of Caiaphas in the Gospels, as his curt "you know nothing" to the priests, suggest that, however cringing to the civil power, he could be a hectoring bully to his inferiors.

In the Tosephta Tractate on the Passover Ceremonies, compiled by Jews some one hundred and fifty years later, but embodying ancient material, we still find an echo of the people's loathing and contempt for these "jobbing" High-priestly families: "Oh, the scourge of the family of Boëthus, a curse on their lances! Oh, the scourge of the family of Annas, a curse on their hissing like vipers! Oh, the scourge of the family of Cantheros, a curse on their feathers! Oh, the scourge of the family of Ismael ben Phabi, a curse on their fists! They themselves are high-priests, their sons are the treasurers, their sons-in-law commandants, and their flunkys beat the people with sticks!"

Nothing could describe better than this short passage the suppressed fury of the ordinary folk at the parvenu insolence of these priestly profiteers. Such undoubtedly they were, for Jewish tradition is unmistakable on the point. The firm Annas and sons is supposed to have made its prodigious wealth

by the sale of sacrificial requisites at the Temple, the profit on the sale of doves being particularly mentioned. For all we know, St Joseph bought the two turtle-doves for the Presentation at the Temple from this firm, and the spite of the old man Annas at Our Lord's trial may well have been provoked by Christ's attack on the shameful trafficking in the Temple courts, which Annas must have considered an unwarrantable interference with an old-established business. Of course, the High Priests were far too much the *grands seigneurs* to do the selling themselves. That, of course, was in the hands of agents, but Christ's words to those who sold doves: "Take these things away and do not make My Father's house a den of thieves," may not have taken long to reach the ears of the head of the firm. This Annas was envied by many as the happiest of men, because he had placed the members of his household in such lucrative posts. True, he was deposed in favour of his sons and son-in-law, but these deposed gentlemen often retained almost as much power out of office as in it.

The ruling High Priest was President of the Sanhedrin, a Jewish Senate of seventy-one members, with extensive powers as an executive body, and as a Court of Justice. Under the Roman Governors its direct power affected only Judea proper, but its indirect power went much further, and it possessed a real, though somewhat undefined, authority throughout Syria, and had influence throughout the Jewish world. Originally this Senate consisted of the noble priestly families of Israel, but Herod, who wanted to break the power of this House of Lords, put to death no less than forty-five of its members on one occasion.

The old aristocratic party never recovered from this blow.

In the days of Christ the Pharisees were certainly in the majority. It had become a house of lawyers, rather than a House of Lords. The New Testament calls them Scribes, but lawyers would perhaps convey the idea better, or they might be described as a cross between a schoolmaster and a lawyer. The Pharisees were undoubtedly the popular party, and the Scribes were mostly, though not necessarily, on their side. The members seem to have been divided into High Priests and priests, lawyers or Scribes, and simple "Elders of the people." The second and third sections were merely lay-folk; the third did not even belong to the profession of the law. Besides the ruling High Priests, there was a large number of members of the Senate styled "High Priests," though the reason for this is not quite certain. Probably they were the chiefs of the twenty-four courses, or classes, of priests, into which the whole priesthood was divided for the duties of the Temple service. Some scholars, however, hold that they were the members of the few families from which the High Priests were chosen. It is a fact that the High Priest for the last hundred years was chosen from about five families, but whether this clique arrogated to all its members the honourable title of High Priest is, I think, hard to prove.

We chance to have the names of about forty members of the Sanhedrin which condemned Our Lord to death. How many, however, were actually present we cannot say. The Mishna tells us, and there is little reason to doubt it, that for an acquittal a presence of twenty-three members and a verdict

of not guilty by twelve was sufficient, but for a condemnation a majority of one did not suffice, hence the presence of at least twenty-five members, and a verdict of guilty by at least fourteen was demanded. As long as Our Lord remained in Galilee and Peræa, and outside Judea proper, He was fairly safe, as the shadowy criminal jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, outside the Procurator's province, was difficult to enforce.

The High Priest's position in the Sanhedrin must have been an extremely difficult one. The High Priests and the priestly nobility were Sadducees, and the objects of bitter dislike to the Pharisees. It is not easy to get a clear idea what Sadducees really were. Originally, no doubt, they stood to the Pharisees as Protestants stand towards Catholics: the former accepted only the Written Word, the latter added traditions. Unfortunately, Pharisees and Sadducees drifted ever further apart, the former exaggerating traditions above the natural and above the written law; the latter, through rejection of tradition, becoming a sort of free-thinkers. Apparently the Sadducean High Priests were just Deists, accepting the existence of a Deity who, though in ages past He may have helped His chosen people, did not now trouble Himself with the affairs of men. They denied the resurrection of the body; some survival after death no doubt they granted, but as to the life beyond they indulged in extreme scepticism, and the world of angels and spirits they regarded as so much moonshine.

If we find it hard to realize that people of that stamp could be Jewish High Priests, we had better reflect on modern examples of similar phenomena.

Nothing could be more untrue to history than to picture to oneself Caiaphas as a Jewish fanatic, driven to frenzy by the supposed blasphemies of a Galilean prophet. He was probably a cultured, easy-going, pleasure-loving, successful tradesman, whose first concern probably was "*surtout pas de zele*." If asked for his religion he would probably have replied, what a later Jew is supposed to have said, that it was the religion of every sensible man, and if further pressed as to what that was, he would have smiled and answered "no sensible man ever says."

The High Priests frankly accepted the Roman regime, and wished to avoid trouble. What more natural? They were appointed by the Roman Governor, or by some Herod whose proudest title was "Friend of Rome, Friend of Cæsar." The Gospel in putting on Caiaphas's lips the threat: "the Romans will come and take our place and nation," exactly portrays their innermost mind. They lived in perpetual fear lest the Imperial Power should sweep them out of their comfortable and lucrative positions; and popular fanaticism, which they despised, would upset the existing regime. Hated and mistrusted by their own people, the Roman power was their stay. "We have no King but Cæsar." A Messiah was the last thing they wanted. They were so utterly in the hands of the civil power that their very sacred vestments, which they needed for their office, were kept under lock and key in the Castle Antonia, and only graciously doled out on the four great feasts of the year, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and the Atonement. Herod had begun this, by suddenly seizing the holy garments to prevent a High Priest whom he disliked from officiating. The

Roman Governors of course did the same. How galling and humiliating it must have been to believing Jews that the Sacred Ephod, the Breast-plate and Mitre, and Girdle and Tunic, the emblems of Aaron's majesty, had to be obtained by supplication from an uncircumcised Gentile. They sent humble embassies to their Roman masters, and at last, some ten years after Christ's death, they were allowed to keep the vestments in their own custody. The High Priests had not complete control even over the Temple. The Temple treasury and the fabric itself were expressly removed from their jurisdiction, and sometimes bestowed on one of the Herods, or on the Roman Governor, whose very tower overlooked the Temple courts.

There was, however, one day in the year when the High Priest was in the anxious thoughts of every Israelite—the Day of Atonement. We still possess the Mishna treatise YOMA, describing his duties and functions on that great day, and it is worth while to give a short account of it, as perhaps nowhere is Jewish scrupulosity and religion and the place of the High Priest in the minds of the people more strikingly illustrated. A week before the Day of Atonement they fetched the High Priest (*i.e.* on Tishri 10th) from his private house and brought him to the Council Hall, for fear lest he should incur some ritual impurity, and to rehearse his liturgy. During this week he performed priestly services: sprinkled the blood of the victims, offered incense, trimmed the lamps, and offered the head and left foot of the sacrifices. He had as companions some of the Elders, who read out to him the order of the ceremonies. They said to him: "Sir, High Priest, recite this aloud! Perhaps you forgot this, or never learnt it."

On the morning of the Day of Atonement they led him to the eastern gate, and made oxen and goats and lambs pass before him, so that he should get accustomed to his function. During the week he was allowed to eat what he chose, but, on the eve of the Atonement they did not allow him to eat much, for eating causes weariness.

The Elders of the Council brought him to the Elders of the Priests, and they led him to the Storehouse of Incense. There they imposed the oath upon him, and then went their way. They said to him : " Sir, High Priest, we are the representatives of the Council, and you are the representative of us and the Council. We impose an oath on you by Him, who made His name rest in this house, that you shall not alter a word of what we told you." If the High Priest himself were a doctor, then he gave explanations of Holy Writ ; if he were not, then the students of the doctors gave them instead. If he were a reader he read aloud ; if not, they read to him out of Job, Ezra, Chronicles and Daniel. If he became sleepy, young Levites snapped their fingers at him, and said : " Sir, High Priest, stand up and drive away sleep by walking " [barefooted on the marble pavement]. Thus they had to keep him busy till the time of the sacrifice. Then an official came to them and said : " Go out and see whether it is time to sacrifice." When the time drew near, the man on watch cried, " The Morning Star." Then a purple cloth was hung between the High Priest and the people. He washed his hands and feet, entered the bath, immersed once, emerged, and then dried himself, and put on the golden garments they brought him, and again washed his hands and feet.

Then they brought him the daily sacrifice. He cut the victim's throat, and another priest completed the slaying, but he himself caught up the blood and did the sprinkling. After this he entered the Temple to offer up incense, trim the lamps, and offer the head and the parts and the meal offering and the wine. This done they led him to the Parva Hall, a room on the north side.

Again a purple cloth was hung up between him and the people, and he took his second bath. Whereupon they brought him his white linen garments, and in these garments he came and stood by the side of his ox, which stood between the hall and the altar, its head northwards, but its face turned westwards. The High Priest standing on its left (east) side, facing the west, laid both his hands on him and spoke the confession: "O Lord, I have sinned before Thee, done evil and wrong, I and mine. Forgive, Lord, the sin, the evil and the wrong in which I did sin, evil and wrong, I and mine, according to the word in the law of Thy servant Moses: For in this day they shall obtain atonement for you, to cleanse you, and from all your sins you shall be clean before Jahveh." Those standing behind the High Priest replied, "Blessed be the glorious name of His kingdom, world without end." Then he went to the east of the fore-hall, to the north of the altar, with the presiding priest to the right, and the chief of the priestly class for the week on his left, and there were two goats and an urn with two lots. He shook the urn and took out the two lots, one of which stood for JAHVEH, and the other for AZAZEL. If the one with Jahveh's name was on his right, the presiding priest said, "Sir, High Priest, raise your right"; if on his

left, the chief of the weekly class said, "Raise your left." Whereupon he laid the lots on the goats, saying, "A sacrifice of expiation for Jahveh." Those that stood behind him answered, "Blessed be the name of His kingdom, world without end."

Then he bound a scarlet thread on the head of the goat to be sent away, and brought it to its place, whence it would be taken, and the other goat to the place where it was to be slain. Now he approached the second ox, laid both his hands on it, and said: "O Lord, I have sinned, done evil and wrong before Thee, I and mine and Thy holy people, the sons of Aaron." And the formulæ were repeated as above.

Then he slew the ox, caught its blood in a basin, and gave it to a man standing on the fourth step of the Temple mount to stir it lest the blood should get clotted. He then mounted right up to the altar, with a coal-pan in his hand, took coals out, came down and put the coal-pan on the Robed of the Forecourt. Next they brought him a vessel and a shovel. He took two handfuls of incense and put them on the plate. Then he took the shovel in his right hand, and the plate in his left, and went the round of the inner walls of the Temple till he came to the place between the two curtains separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The two curtains were about a yard behind each other, the outer one raised on the north and the inner one on the south side.

He went between the two curtains till he came to the north wall, and then proceeded south till he came to the "Foundation," *i.e.* a stone placed there instead of the Ark of the Covenant, which had been lost since the destruction of the Temple in 568 B.C. Upon this stone he put the shovel and coals, and heaped

the incense thereon till the place was filled with smoke. He returned the same way as he came, and, in the Holy Place, said a short prayer, not a long one, lest Israel should be too anxious about his absence. Then he took the blood from the attendant who was stirring it, went to the same place as before, and sprinkled it once upwards, and seven times downwards, while counting steadily and evenly "one and one, one and two, one and three, till one and seven." Then he went out and put the blood on the golden table. He next killed the goat which they brought him, and did with the blood exactly as before.

Then he took again the blood of the heifer and sprinkled the curtain on the outside, just opposite where the "Foundation" was, counting exactly as before. After that he did the same with the blood of the goat, then he poured the blood of the heifer into that of the goat and poured both back into the empty basin. Now he stepped before the Golden Altar to purify the same from above downwards. Having done this, he returned to the goat to be driven away, laid both his hands upon it, and made the same confession as above for all the people. As soon as the priests and the people outside in the forecourt heard the High Priest use the name of Jahveh, they prostrated themselves, and with face to the ground they cried: "Blessed be the glorious name of His kingdom, world without end." They then handed the goat to the man, who had to lead it away. It was surrounded with a railing, lest the mob should get at it, for they used to pull out its hairs, shouting: "Take our sins, and be off." The principal citizens of Jerusalem accompanied it to the first hut—there were ten such huts, for the distance was about twelve miles. At

each hut they offered some bread and water to the man who led the goat to its doom. A new set of companions accompanied the man from hut to hut, but after the tenth hut they only went with him half way, stopping however where they could see what happened to the goat. Finally the man tore off the scarlet band from the goat, grasped the rock with one hand and with the other grasped the goat by the head between its horns and pushed it over the edge of the precipice, so that it fell backwards. The man returned to the last hut and remained there overnight. Meanwhile the High Priest had gone to rip open the carcasses of the heifer and the first goat. He cut out the fat parts and laid them on a plate and brought them to the altar and burnt them. The carcasses were put on spits and carried to the place where they were burnt. Then he waited till he received the report that the second goat was thrown over the precipice, and this report he received by a system of waving of white flags from hill-top to hill-top.

The Synagogue Assistant brought the Thorah to the President of the Synagogue. He gave it to the Priest-President and he gave it to the High Priest, who received it standing, and read Numbers xvi. and xxiii. 27-32; then he rolled up the scroll, put it in the bosom of his garment and said: "Still more stands written than what I read to you," and then recited the remainder by heart, viz. Numbers xxix. 7-11. He next gave a blessing eightfold, for the Thorah, the Worship, the Thanksgiving, the Remission of Sins, for the Sanctuary, for Israel, for the priesthood, and any other intention he chose. This reading he might do in his white linen vestments or

in his state robes. If he did the former, he washed his hands and feet, stripped, immersed once, emerged, dried himself, donned his state robes, washed his hands and feet again, came out and offered a ram for himself and a ram for the people, and seven spotless lambs. Then he washed his hands and feet again, bathed as before, and revested in his state robes and washed hands and feet again. He then re-entered to offer the Evening Sacrifice, and trim the lamps, and again washed hands and feet. Finally they brought him his own daily garments, they accompanied him home, where a banquet was spread to celebrate his having satisfactorily gone through the ordeal. He had tasted no food for twenty-four hours. Annas in his old age must have been glad that his more vigorous sons, or his son-in-law, Caiaphas, had to fulfil this task instead of himself.

Just before the war the Augustinians of the Assumption made extensive excavations on a site which they had recently purchased, and on which tradition placed the house of Caiaphas. This tradition can be traced back to 333 A.D. when a pilgrim from Bordeaux, going from the Pool of Siloe to Mount Sion, described how he passed the house of Caiaphas, where the column still was at which Christ was scourged. This house was evidently a well-known object of interest and awe in those days. St Cyril of Jerusalem when he held his catechism for converts in 348 A.D. held the lonesome ruined building up as a sign of God's wrath: "There stands to rebuke you the house of Caiaphas, showing by its present desolation the power of Him, who was condemned there!" Not very long afterwards a basilica was built over the ruins and the cave where Peter hid

when he left the courtyard of Caiaphas after his denial. Thus the memory of the site has come down through the ages. St Jerome in his letter to Sabinian, c. 390 A.D., speaks of the basilica of St Peter, and a pilgrim, c. 530 A.D., describes how he arrived at the house of Caiaphas. This basilica stood for nearly a thousand years, but was destroyed soon after 1320 A.D. The site however was never quite forgotten; for a time the grotto still was shown where Peter wept, but eventually even the grotto disappeared, an ordinary dwelling-place being built over it. None the less the tradition did not die, though it got confused, placing the house of Caiaphas about 300 yards further on. The recent excavations however leave little doubt as to the precise spot. There can still be seen a heavy door lintel with the Hebrew inscription "LEASHAM HUA KORBAN" indicating the store-room for guilt offerings. These guilt offerings, described in Lev. v., must have formed a considerable part of the priests' requisites. We know from 4 Kings xii. 16 that the offerings in money were not deposited in the temple itself; and neither were the offerings in kind. Some storing place must have been found, and the High Priest's headquarters were evidently thought most suitable. It is a huge flat-ceilinged room, large enough to hold a hundred people, and well stocked with gifts in kind: it must have been a veritable treasure-house. Close by another large room, eight yards by six, seems to have served a similar purpose. They found a series of twenty Jewish dry and liquid measures, made of stone, and about the same number of standard weights giving the Jewish mina, its divisions and multiples, for the correct receiving and

booking of the tithes, a shekel and a half in silver of the first century. They also found what apparently were dungeons, with a single opening at the top and rings contrived in the walls, and in the corners two great holes where the prisoner probably stood during the scourging. Caiaphas had, as High Priest, the right of imprisonment, and those cells were an appropriate part of his residence.

It is not unlikely that in one of these cells the High Priest of the New Covenant spent the night before His death on Calvary. He thereby broke the bonds of the Ancient Law, Aaron's priesthood passed away for ever, and the everlasting priesthood according to Melchizedek lives for evermore.

CHAPTER VII

HEROD, THE FOX

PRINCES of Native States tend to drift towards the centre of the Empire. Indian Princes find their way to Oxford in these days, so also had Herod come to Rome, together with his elder brother Archelaus, a little over nineteen hundred years ago. Their father, the great native potentate of Palestine, insisted on his sons going to Rome. Archelaus and Antipas were his sons by Malthace, the Samaritan; two older children, Alexander and Aristobulus, by Mariamne, the granddaughter of the Priest-King Hyrcanus, were their father's favourites. They also had had their education in the imperial City, till he fetched them home at the age of about twenty, a few years earlier. These poor youths had had a short and stormy career. True, their father had forthwith suitably married them—the first to a princess of Cappadocia, the second to his cousin Berenice—but their married bliss had not lasted long. They had incessantly quarrelled with their old father, or he with them, and at length he provided for a definite settlement of these quarrels by arranging for their execution at Samaria three years before in 7 B.C.

His eldest brother, or, rather, half-brother, Antipater, whom at first his father could not bear, had

now come into high favour, but he had so clumsily schemed for the death of the old tyrant, that he had roused his suspicion, and had recently arrived in Rome to escape his father's all too-benevolent intentions in his regard. While the young intriguer was at Rome, the dread If news arrived that Pheroras, his uncle, the old Herod's brother, had died of poison, and that the poison had really been intended for the old Herod himself. Antipater was recalled to Palestine and judged by the Roman Authorities, the Governor Varus, by whom he had been cast into chains. A short time before, Antipas's little nephew, a lad of only six years, had come to Rome. The young boy, owing to the friendship of the Empress for his mother, was getting on famously at court. No one foresaw the gay young man about town he was soon to become, the fortune he was to run through, the extraordinary success he would have for some years, and the ghastly death he would die soon after the fawning crowd had acclaimed him as a god.

Our Antipas, for such was the name of Herod the Fox, was as yet safe at Rome, not over-anxious, I suppose, to become his father's favourite. Yet, on the disgrace of Antipater, his turn came; his father designated him as Crown Prince and successor in his will, and as his father was getting very ill, it almost seemed that he would succeed to his large kingdom. But between the cup and the lip there is many a slip. His father had left Jerusalem to try the waters of Callirhoe, but they did him little good. He returned to Jericho, and in the last madness of rage only five days before his death he had his son Antipater taken from prison and executed. Unfortunately,

he had also changed his will at the last moment, dividing his kingdom in three parts for his three sons Archelaus, Antipas and Philip. Archelaus was only to have the title of king, the others that of tetrarch; and Antipas was only to have Galilee and Peræa.

Would Rome recognize his father's last will or not? Antipas did his very best at Rome, and had strong influence at court, but he failed. Rome refused, indeed, the title of king to Archelaus, but practically divided the country up into three parts, as Herod had willed. The two brothers Archelaus and Antipas both pleaded before Augustus. At first, Archelaus had everything against him, for an embassy of Jews had already come from Jerusalem to protest against his appointment, for he had already massacred three thousand Jews in the few days between his father's funeral and his departure for Rome.

None the less, fortune favoured the elder brother. Rome made a political mistake. Archelaus was a brutal ruler. St Joseph had great reason to fear, as the Gospel says, when he heard that Archelaus ruled instead of his father, and, being admonished by an angel in sleep, he went back not to Judea, but to Galilee, where Antipas ruled more mildly than his brother across the border. For ten years Antipas had to put up with his brother as neighbour, but, then, Archelaus's cruelties had so exasperated the Jews that they had gone to Rome to complain. Archelaus was unable to refute their accusations, and was sent into exile to Vienne, in France. After his brother's departure Antipas had to put up with the Roman Governors as neighbours, and, particularly, with Pontius Pilate, with whom he was not on the best of terms.

Antipas's dominion had an extraordinary shape. It was like a big figure eight on the map, for, in the centre, it dwindled to a width of only a few miles. In fact, the northern half only just touched the southern half, and the Lake of Galilee was a connecting link between the two.

Antipas ruled over this curious district, about the size of Yorkshire, for nearly forty years, that is, from about three years before Our Lord's birth, till some six years after His Resurrection. Judged from a mere economic standpoint, his rule was, on the whole, probably beneficial for the district. Almost the whole of Our Lord's private, and much of His public life was passed in it, but for the time spent in Jerusalem and Samaria, in the territory of Tyre and Sidon, and in the Decapolis.

Let me give you a word about these, as it will illustrate Antipas's own country. First, the territory of the Ten Towns, or the Decapolis, to give it its Greek name.

The Ten Towns were Scythopolis, Pella, Gadara, Hippos, Gamala, Dion, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Raphana, Kanatha. All these towns, except the first, were situated to the east and south-east of the Lake of Galilee, and were independent Greek boroughs, self-contained, with their own Municipal Council and City authorities, in no way subject to the Native Prince, Antipas, and only vaguely subject to the Roman Governor of Syria. These municipalities were throbbing centres of Greek life, with amphitheatres, public baths, temples to Zeus, Pallas, Hercules, Astarte. They had their own coinage, though the figure of the Roman Emperor had always to be stamped on one side, the obverse was left to

the fancy of the city fathers. These towns gave prominent personages to the commonwealth. Cicero's contemporary Philodemus, the Epicurean, and the Greek poet Meleager, came from Gadara. Theodore, of Gadara, a somewhat older contemporary of Our Blessed Lord, had become Greek tutor to the Emperor Tiberius himself! The idea that Palestine was a sort of benighted corner of the earth in the century before and after Our Lord's birth is utterly at variance with historical fact.

The Roman General Pompey had freed many of these cities, c. 60 B.C., from the yoke of the Jews, and they had, in gratitude, adopted the Pompeian era. True, their complete liberty had not lasted long, for Herod the Great had included them in his dominions, but, after his death, they obtained their independence again, in fact, successfully resisted raids into their territory from the Jewish State. According to the Gospel of St Matthew, numbers of these Ten Town burghers followed Our Blessed Lord, the Wonder-worker of Galilee; and, according to St Mark, when Christ had cured the demoniac whose devils had gone into the Gadarene swine, He said to him: "Go to thy house and to thy people and tell them what the Lord has done for thee, and how He had mercy on thee. And he went and he preached in the Ten Town country what Jesus had done to him, and all were amazed."

Alas! the Gospel brought by the demoniac did but little good. They were afraid of Christ, and begged Him to leave their territory.

Antipas being thus surrounded by "modern" cities, would have a modern city for his capital, and he decided to create it; a brand-new city of his own,

To flatter his imperial master, he would call it after him, Tiberias.

About three miles north of Nazareth he had already rebuilt the town of Sepphoris, and transformed it into the very gem of Galilee. Our Lord, as youth and young man, must have walked many a time from St Joseph's house to see the magnificent buildings rising. When Christ was twenty-four years old, Antipas started his great undertaking. It was no small task to found a town. Moreover, he had had very bad luck. In digging the foundations of the first buildings, they had found human remains, and it seemed clear that they had struck an ancient cemetery. Now, for Jews, the mere touch of a corpse meant ritual uncleanness, and no respectable Jew would have anything to do with a town built on a cemetery! However, Antipas was not dismayed. By every conceivable means did he get together some sort of population for his new city. Foreigners from all parts who hoped for employment in this new-fangled capital; subjects of Herod, who were simply forced to reside there, and, as Josephus remarks, even common beggars and vagabonds were attracted by his promise of rent-free cottages, and all sorts of privileges to come and live there. He built a spacious synagogue. When it suited him, he could flatter Jewish religious enthusiasm, but he was not over-scrupulous in his own religious observance. It gave considerable scandal to his stricter brethren—after all, his own Jewish blood was of the thinnest, his mother was a Samaritan, his father an Idumæan—that in his palace at Tiberias he had representations of human figures, which were an abomination for a strict Jew; but how could one

have a palace in true "modern style" without them? We get an insight into Antipas's character from his conduct towards John the Baptist. We hardly realise the immense impression which this austere prophet gave to the more seriously-minded people of the day.

Twenty years after St John's death, St Paul met people baptized with the baptism of John in far-away Ephesus, and the fame of John the Baptist was so great that in distant Basrah, near the Persian Gulf, the Mandæans, generations afterwards, came to worship him. True, the Baptist did no miracles, but Josephus, writing eighty years after St John began his mission, still shows the public opinion of Jewry by saying that the Jews attributed the defeat of Antipas by Aretas, of which we shall speak in a moment, to Divine vengeance for the murder of John. Josephus calls St John a good man, "exhorting the Jews to the exercise of virtue, commanding them that living justly amongst themselves and acting religiously towards God they should come to baptism. For he said that baptism would only then be acceptable unto God, when they used it not to be cleansed from crimes, but unto cleanliness of the body, in order that when their minds had previously been purged by righteousness, they might add also purity of body. As many from all sides streamed together unto him (for they took a wonderful delight in his discourses), Herod fearing lest the authority of the man should bring the people to insurrection—for they seemed to do everything on his advice—thought it much better to do away with him before some novelty should arise on his account, rather than after the catastrophe had occurred to have to deplore

things too late." This description of the Baptist is just what we should expect of a liberal Jew. He is anxious to propitiate the "modern mind" of his day by showing that St John expected no intrinsic religious efficacy of his baptism. In a sense, true enough, but St John would not have put it in the tame and feeble fashion which Josephus adopts. With regard to Herod's motives in putting St John to death, if we combine Josephus with what we know from the Gospel we get an exact idea of that worthy's mind.

As a thoroughly up-to-date and "enlightened" Jew, Antipas had, of course, no room for "religious fanaticism" in his dominions. It looked so bad for the Romans. Besides, what would his smart friends in Rome think of it? And then these popular revival preachers were apt to drive the common people to all sorts of excesses. It was all very well to teach the lower classes good morals, but everything in measure. These revivalist scenes at the Jordan were getting dangerous. Some, even of the crowd, had a suspicion that John was the long-promised Messiah. The family of the Herods were averse to Messianic fanaticism. The craze to be baptized had affected everybody. The Inland Revenue officers, who had leased the taxes, and filled their own purses in the process, not, as a rule, a very scrupulous set, were to be seen at the Jordan eagerly inquiring what they had to do to be saved. Nay, the soldiers, the native troops whose military discipline was not always exemplary, were asking the great preacher about their duty, and given a triple self-denying ordinance: No violence; no lying denunciations to the Government; no adding to your pay by squeezing your fellow-natives. Very admirable, of course; but a sensible Government

does not want the army weakened by too much piety. The Jerusalem authorities showed caution. They had sent a committee to inquire from John what his real intentions were, and had received what they considered an unsatisfactory answer. The rude prophet had welcomed most pious Pharisees and cultured Sadducees with words like these: "You brood of vipers, who has taught YOU to flee from the wrath to come!" The Church leaders there were secretly hostile, but dared not openly to defy this immense popularity. Herod would have remained undecided too, but, to his regret, he could not very well. John was preaching but a few miles from Herod's country residence, close to the castle Machærus, sometimes almost within earshot. Moreover, just across the frontier on the south and east was Herod's irate father-in-law, sure to intrigue with any disaffected section of Herod's subjects. Hence, it was best, at least, to secure the person of the Baptist before anything serious happened.

So he had him imprisoned in the fortress Machærus, just on the Dead Sea, the most formidable stronghold Antipas had, built by his late father. Herod had taken the opportunity to interview John. John had been abominably rude to him about his divorce. His first wife, as a matter of fact, after he repudiated her, had for a time lived in this very castle, and had escaped. No doubt, her father had bought over the natives.

John had told him to his face: it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. Yet, John had interested him. He rather enjoyed talking to him. There was something very fine about the man. The majesty of the Forerunner had cowed even Herod

somewhat. He spoke to him again and again, and loved to do so. The keen eyes of Herodias had noticed it. She would have killed the Baptist, if she could, says St Mark. She bided her time. At last came her hour. The drunken orgy was her chance. Herod might do now what he would not in his sober hours. He was frantic over the dance of her daughter. He had sworn to give her anything she wanted. The young girl did not know what to ask. Her mother would know. When the king heard of the choice: "The best dish for the dinner! John's head on a plate!" he gasped for a moment in terror for the crime, but, with a brain burning with alcohol, he dreaded lest his leering, staggering boon companions might think he was troubled with scruples. The dish was brought in. And Herodias enjoyed the food of her hate.

Not long after the death of the Baptist Herod was troubled with another serious difficulty. The report came to him that a certain Jesus of Nazareth, accompanied by twelve followers, went through his dominions doing amazing things. It was really through His disciples that His fame spread so rapidly, for they went from village to village doing wonders almost as great as their Master's.

Herod's servants told him incredible things. His own steward, Chuza, was mixed up in it. At least, his wife was a most firm believer in the new Prophet. The new Preacher was, in a sense, very different from John. John did no miracles, but Jesus did. John baptized, Jesus did not, though His disciples did. So different, and yet so similar. Herod's servants, still appalled by the terrible crime of John's murder, whispered that it might be John come to life again;

that would account for His strange, miraculous powers. Herod at last began to think that there was something in what they said. In fact, he said himself: "He might be John Redivivus." He expressed a keen wish to see the new Prophet. But He was always on a journey, in and out of Herod's dominions, one day in Philip's territory, Cæsarea Philippi, another day in Phœnicia, then in the Decapolis, or in Samaria.

Herod sometimes laughed at his own superstitious fears. "John, I beheaded, but who can this man be of whom I hear so many marvels?" Christ seems never to have been in Tiberias, at least, the Gospel does not mention it. Had it been easy, no doubt, Herod would have made the attempt to bring Him before him. Not unlikely that Herodias, who had experienced the influence of John on her "husband," saw to it that he should not meet another Prophet who so loudly proclaimed "he that marries a divorcee commits adultery." When Our Lord's popularity grew, and He was followed by thousands, and on the point of being proclaimed Messiah by the crowd, Herod apparently took fright. He preferred to avoid taking drastic measures; if this Christ would only preach elsewhere, he would be grateful! Hence, he managed that the Pharisees, who were hand-in-glove with the Herodian party, should go to Christ, and say: "Go away from here and depart, for Herod wants to kill Thee!" But Christ said to them: "Go and tell that fox, look, to-day and to-morrow I drive out devils and perform healings and only the day after I shall come to My end. None the less, to-day and to-morrow, and the day after I must indeed 'be going' My way, for it would not be right

if a prophet died outside Jerusalem." It would not be right to infringe on Jerusalem's monopoly of murdering prophets! Such was Our Lord's bitter cry, softened by the pitiful words that soon followed: "To-day and to-morrow, some few days more that is, I shall continue My life of miracles, then I shall go to Jerusalem to die, but not before My time." Note that Our Lord refers to His marvels, rather than to His preaching, for it was the miracles which staggered Herod. To-day and to-morrow, and then the third day. On that third day Herod would have his desire, he would see Christ, but in a way not foreseen.

He chanced to be at Jerusalem to keep the Passover, as a Jew should. He lived, no doubt, in the Old Ashmonæan palace, on the top of the hill, overlooking the Temple, not far from where Pilate lived. It was really courteous and considerate of Pilate to send Him the Galilean Prophet for trial, because He was his subject. Pilate had not always shown such deference, certainly not when he had a crowd of Galileans massacred at Jerusalem. In any case, it was a sign of goodwill and an advance to reconciliation. The situation was delicate. Herod was really glad of the chance of seeing Jesus, of whom he had heard so much. Undoubtedly, this Jesus had done astounding things; perhaps there would be a chance of seeing something really worth seeing and bragging about having seen it. Herod was quite voluble in his talk to the Prophet. Question quickly followed question. No answer. Another attempt, another stream of words. No answer. The principal priests and Scribes stood round clamouring. But never an answer. Herod began to feel awkward; in fact, he

felt outwitted. But a man of his culture and breeding is not often thrown off his guard, or if so, he soon recovers himself. With a smile, he turns to the officers round him of his own entourage. "Is not He a fool? Pilate was quite right, the man is harmless. I had better leave Him in his hands." In some such words, no doubt, he turned to his company. "Here, man, if you are a king, you must have a royal mantle!" and with a gesture of good-natured banter he took a garment, lying at hand, and threw it over His shoulders. A burst of obsequious laughter from his flunkys. Then, with a gesture of a grand Seigneur: "Tell the Governor the man is harmless," and he turned his back in contempt on the shrieking crowd of priests and Scribes.

One would have thought the murder of John would have sickened Herod of Herodias. But it did not. I daresay, he sulked for a time, but he went back to her. How had these two become inseparable? He had first met her at Rome, a few years earlier. She was his half-brother Philip's wife. They became infatuated with one another, and the infatuation lasted for life. The whole thing was arranged while in Rome.

I do not think his brother Philip minded much. Such society arrangements were not at all unusual in pagan Rome. The best society did that sort of thing. Augustus, the model Emperor, when Herod was at Rome as a boy, was notorious for not leaving other people's wives alone, and, stranger still his own wife, not only did not object, but helped him in his escapades. Herodias was his niece, but what of that? The kings of Egypt married their own sisters almost as a regular thing.

But Herod's legitimate wife *did* mind, and what was more, her father minded very much, indeed. She was a Nabataean princess. And the Nabataean Royal family was not one to play with. Their dominions adjoined those of Herod, and were very extensive. Harethath, or, to give him his Greek name, Aretas, was a man of importance. He occupied the throne of Petra no less than forty-seven years, and even reconquered Damascus. He had had difficulties in the beginning of his reign. Rome had resented his assumption of the title king without Rome's consent, but had finally consented. Augustus seemed to have disliked him, still, he thought he had better leave well alone. We have no portrait of Herod, but we have a number of coins of Aretas, with his portraits stamped on the one side and the portrait of Halda or Sekailat on the other, and it must be said that Herod's father-in-law had a refined and classical face. He styled himself on his coins "Lover of his people," probably in contrast to the fawning inscription of the Roman vassal kings. His capital was one of the most remarkable cities of that time. Its gigantic buildings were hewn out of the living rock. Its extensive ruins are to-day the amazement of the visitors in those parts, and present something exceedingly imposing, and certainly unique to the eyes even now.

Aretas, however angry, seems to have waited his opportunity of revenge. It was, perhaps, hardly dignified to start a war to avenge the troubles in Herod's harem. But not very long after the chance came. A frontier dispute in the district of Galaad it was. Aretas met Herod's army, and simply swept it off the field. His Arab

cavalry proved irresistible, and Herod's defeat was complete.

The common folk whispered, it was God's punishment for the murder of the Baptist. But Herod implored the help of Rome. He was a vassal of Rome, would Rome ignominiously surrender him to the daring of an Arab potentate? Tiberius, the Emperor, evidently looked upon the matter as serious. Not, of course, that he cared about Herod personally very much, though, as a matter of fact, Herod's nephew, Agrippa, moved in the highest circles in Rome, a boon companion one might almost have said of Tiberius's adopted son, Caius. However, it would not do for Rome to allow these frontier raids. Tiberius wrote to Vitellius, the Governor of Syria, to capture the Nabatæan monarch dead or alive. Vitellius had to obey, and marched southward with his troops. He did not care for the expedition. He probably thought Herod had got what he deserved. No sooner came the news that Tiberius had died on March 16, 36 A.D. than Vitellius considered himself at liberty to await further orders. He marched his troops back without touching Aretas, and left Herod to pocket the insult and defeat as best he could.

But Herod, by this time a man of at least sixty, clung to Herodias. Apparently, he was completely in her power. And she finally brought him to disaster. On the accession of Caligula, Herodias's brother Agrippa had come into good fortune. The mad Emperor had given him the tetrarchy of Lysanias and of Philip, who had died two years before. (This was, of course, not Philip, her husband, but another Philip, another son of Herod the Great.) Moreover, Rome had granted Agrippa the style and title of

king. Her ambition drove Herod to Rome to go and ask for the same distinction. The old man did not relish the thought at all, but being under the thumb of Herodias, he went, or, rather, they both went, for she went with him. Everything went wrong with them in the capital. Agrippa, her brother, no doubt, in the hope of getting Herod's territories, as he had got those of Philip and Lysanias, had turned informer against Herod. He denounced him of having intrigued with the notorious Sejanus, once the omnipotent, but now disgraced low-born favourite of Tiberius. He accused him of having a secret understanding with Rome's enemy, the Parthian king, Artaban III., and, in proof, pointed to the fact that Herod had sent him military supplies. This latter item seems rather surprising; but, on the other hand, it can easily be understood. After his bloody defeat by Aretas, Herod had looked round for any help he could get. He had asked Rome. But it was safer to have two strings to one's bow. He had also turned to Parthia, Rome's ancient enemy, but Aretas's next door neighbour on the East. Herod was a Jew, and Artaban III. hated Jews; at least, he persecuted them fiercely in his own dominions. But politics are politics. A Parthian king would never be sorry to have his finger in a Palestinian pie. If Rome knew, it would be unpleasant, but if Rome did help, he would see to it that Rome would never know. However, Herod the Fox had miscalculated. Perhaps Herodias had told her brother a little too much. In any case, the Emperor believed it. Herod was in disgrace. He was sent into exile to Lyons, in France. Herodias went with him. And in exile they died. Pontius

Pilate ended his days in the same part of the world, but he had a nobler companion of his misfortunes in Claudia Procula. There is a story that Herodias met her end by having her head cut off by the sharp edge of a floating sheet of ice, through which she had fallen. It may be so. But round the deaths of Pilate and Herod terrible legends have woven details perhaps more gruesome than true.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESURRECTION

THOSE who reject the Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord from the dead are fond of taking the accounts of the four Evangelists relating the event, and considering them quite apart, first from the Gospels to which they belong, then from the Acts of the Apostles which follow, and thirdly from the history of the Christian community which for two thousand years has rested on the belief in the Resurrection of its Master. The four accounts of the Evangelists, which are very short, in all about the length of one chapter of this book, are compared; a number of discrepancies in these brief summaries are then emphasized, and their trustworthiness called in doubt, because, for example, one Gospel says the Resurrection happened when it was still dark, another when the sun was risen; or one Gospel says there was one woman present, another several; or one Gospel says there was one angel at the tomb, another two, and so on. These four accounts are then set aside as evidently confused and contradictory, and "the historical evidence" for the Resurrection is declared to be non-existent.

The unwary Catholic apologist may easily fall into the trap set for him: he may try to reconcile the little details in the Gospel Resurrection stories,

imagining that unless he be able to do so, he is abandoning the defence of "the historical evidence."

In order to warn Catholics against this mistake in tactics, it is well to insist that the four Gospel accounts should not thus be isolated. To isolate them is against the rules of every sound historical method ; it is tantamount to abandoning the principles of scientific procedure in order to get rid of evidence that one does not like. The four accounts of the Resurrection are not, as it were, four sheets of papyrus found somewhere in an Egyptian tomb, without antecedent, without history, without context. They form the last chapters of four biographies of the Founder of Christianity, and their trustworthiness is bound up with that of the Gospels themselves. The account of Christ's rising from the dead is not a sudden surprising item tacked on to an ordinary though holy life. The Christ of the Evangelists repeatedly foretells His own death and Resurrection. He raises other people from the dead—a little girl from the bed on which she had died shortly before ; a young lad being borne to burial ; a man buried for four days. He works countless miracles, feeds five thousand people in a desert place, and so on. He is said to have promised the miracle of His own Resurrection as the crowning deed and proof of His mission.

Now to isolate the accounts of His Resurrection from the Gospels, as if they just formed a curious addition, which must be judged by itself, is against every historical instinct. If the Gospels are true, even in broad outline, Christ's Resurrection is but the fitting finale of such a life. Moreover, the fact of the Resurrection is vouched for not merely in the

Gospels. We possess the letters of a contemporary Jew, a man of remarkable character called Saul, a native of Tarsus, a Pharisee trained at Jerusalem in the best rabbinical lore of his day, a man of standing and ability, who at first fiercely opposed the new religion, and then suddenly became its foremost missionary, spending some thirty years in preaching it all over the Roman world, and dying a martyr for his belief. He went from place to place in cities, Greek, Roman, and barbarian, teaching Jesus and the Resurrection. Saul's extant letters go back to 50 A.D. The first was probably written to people in Salonika. In it he refers to his own earlier teaching and the conduct of his converts in Greece: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead," and later on in the same letter: "We believe that Jesus died and rose again." In a letter which is possibly somewhat earlier, written to his converts in Asia, he calls himself "Paul an Apostle by God the Father who raised Christ from the dead." In this Epistle he boasts that the Gospel he preaches is sanctioned by Peter, James, and John, and he says he had been to see Peter and James at Jerusalem fourteen years ago. That is only a few years after the Resurrection of Christ, which took place just outside that town.

Next in time comes his letter to the people of the City of Corinth, in which he says that Jesus rose "the third day," and gives a list of the apparitions of his Risen Master as he said he had received it. Soon afterwards comes his letter to the Romans, in which the Resurrection, as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, is again and again taken for granted.

Now Paul had never been at Rome, and the Christians there were not converts of his own making, yet he sums up their and his religion thus: "Thus is the word of faith which we preach: that if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Evidently these Christians at Rome, who seem there to have professed the new religion for some years already, according to this letter, hoped for salvation in after life precisely because they believed that Jesus rose from the dead. No wonder. For Simon, Bar Jona, a fisherman from Galilee, whom Jesus had made a leader of His followers, and to whom the Risen Jesus first appeared, according to Luke and Paul, and who went early in the morning to investigate the empty grave according to John, this Simon is said to have started a centre of the new religion at Rome. And, in writing to some converts of his in Asia Minor, he begins his letter with the words: "Blessed be God who regenerated us unto living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Ye are faithful in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory." The impression made on the crowd by the preaching of the New Faith is set forth in the remark of the Athenian mob: "He seems to be a setter forth of new gods," because the Apostle preached to them Jesus and the Resurrection.

The first beginnings of the Christian religion have been vividly portrayed by a certain Luke, an educated Greek from Antioch, who joined the Christian community possibly at the very beginning, about two months after the Resurrection, or shortly afterwards, for he appears as a prominent leader a few years

later, and became a companion of St Paul on his journeys. His account of these journeyings has stood the minutest scrutiny of adverse criticism in recent years, and the practically unanimous verdict of scholars is that he is a careful historian and an eye-witness of at least a great part of St Paul's career. Now this Luke describes St Peter's first sermon to a vast multitude, fifty days after the Resurrection, in a place about a mile's walk from the place where Christ's tomb was found empty seven Sundays before, and where the women had spoken to Him. This Peter was the very person to whom, according to Paul in his letters, and Luke in his Gospel, the Risen Christ first appeared, and he was during this speech surrounded by his ten or eleven companions, to whom assembled Christ appeared on the Sunday evening, and with whom He sat at supper. Let me give extracts from that memorable speech: "Men of Israel hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know, Him have ye taken and crucified and slain; Him God hath raised up, having loosed the pain of death. This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we all are witnesses."

About three thousand people joined the Christian community that day, says Luke. They seem to have had a very hard time of it, as they were under the ban of the authorities, who had put Jesus to death two months before, and were persecuted by many of the townsfolk, who were scandalized at this crucified Galilean Messiah. Yet the Christian community seems to have stood the ordeal, and even increased in numbers,

Some of them, I fancy, must have taken a walk to that empty tomb whence Jesus was said to have risen a few weeks before, and some of them must have made inquiries as to the reality of His Resurrection. After all, the dead do not leave their graves every day, and appear to hundreds of people, and take meals again with their friends. Surely some of these three thousand must have been a little interested in the *fact* of the Resurrection, at least as much as our present-day critics.

Suppose, now, the report went abroad that at Kensal Green Cemetery, somewhat further distant from the Mission House where I am writing than Christ's grave was from the Upper Room, a grave was found open, and the man who had been buried in that grave had been seen about repeatedly by a number of people, once even by five hundred people together, and had even taken breakfast and supper with his former friends. Surely before I believed that report, and before I adopted a new mode of life, involving at least some serious inconvenience to myself in consequence, I would think it worth while to take a walk to Kensal Green and have a little talk with some of the folk who were said to have conversed with the man risen from the grave. Would not you? And the citizens of Jerusalem had a splendid opportunity of making the requisite inquiries. It was only some six weeks since the event, the tomb was but a step from where they lived, some of the main witnesses were easily accessible and were well-known people. The room where He had had supper on the evening of the day when He had come out of the tomb was right in the town but a few streets away.

What strikes one most forcibly is the behaviour of the authorities, civil and religious. This new "sect" was clearly unwelcome to the powers that were. In fact, Pentecost must have created rather a disturbance, I should think. Pontius Pilate had repeatedly shown that he was not fond of Jewish Messiahs and national Jewish aspirations, and he had made short work of Messiah-following crowds before. Besides, it was hardly flattering to the Roman magistrate that one who had been executed by his authority was said to be the Risen Lord of a new society. Presumably some Roman official must have made an attempt to find out what really had happened to the body of the Crucified One. Certainly the Jewish religious leaders, who had been the prime movers in the condemnation of the Galilean and thought Him a blasphemer, must have been annoyed at this turn of affairs. If the body of the criminal could still be shown, the whole new movement would have been instantaneously undone. The report of the supposed Resurrection must have come to their ears, say within a week of the execution on Calvary, if not sooner. Did they really make no attempt to get at the facts? If there be a grain of truth in the Gospels, this Jesus must have foretold His Death and Resurrection. Why should not the leaders of the Jewish religion have watched His accredited followers, the so-called Apostles, to see that they practised no deceit? Taking human nature as it is, I should not wonder if they did not on their own account set a guard to watch the tomb, in fact one Gospel says that something of the kind did happen. Besides, it was a public execution, which must have created a great commotion, for Jesus had a great

following, and it would have been particularly difficult to spirit the body away.

Professor Lake thinks it was all a blunder on the part of the women, who by mistake came to the wrong tomb, and finding it empty jumped to the conclusion that Christ was risen, though a young man in white tried to disabuse them, saying: "I know whom you seek, He is not here, come and see the place where they laid Him." But the silly women would not understand his gesture when he tried to show them the correct tomb, and persisted in thinking him an angel, who said: "Christ is risen, He is not here." Nay, when he met some other women he was, to his horror, taken for the Crucified One Himself. So says Professor Lake. My difficulty is to understand why the good young man, so woefully misunderstood, did not try to tell somebody else afterwards, and so put an end to the fable of the Resurrection. Was he perhaps afraid that Pilate, or Caiaphas, too, might perchance take him for an angel, or even for the Risen Christ Himself? How passing strange that not a word has come down to us from those who were most concerned in rejecting the Resurrection of Christ! Surely, if it did not happen, its refutation cannot have been so hard. Perhaps the Christians who made the assertions were beneath contempt? Well, in any case, it would have been so much simpler to refute them than to massacre thousands upon thousands of them in Rome thirty odd years later, and curse them in the Synagogue for two thousand years.

But what of the discrepancies in the Gospel accounts? First as to the TIME. Here are the four expressions used: Mark, "Very early on the first

day of the week, when the sun was risen " Matthew, "Late on the Sabbath day as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week"; Luke, "At early dawn"; John, "Early, when it was yet dark." Now the only discrepancy to be found is clearly not between Gospel and Gospel, but between an expression of an Evangelist and his own explanation. It is surely unreasonable to make a man contradict himself, when there is an easy way to understand his remarks sensibly. Clearly the meaning is: "At early dawn when the sun was just appearing above the horizon." In the hill country of Judea the hill-tops may be gilded by the rising sun when the valleys are still dark. St John says it was yet dark, but this is only a relative term; in any case, even according to him, there was light enough to notice that the stone was rolled away. Besides, what the women thought they might do in the pitch-dark is not clear. They must have needed at least some light for their purpose. But does not St Matthew say, "Late on the Sabbath?" How can this mean early on Sunday? We are accustomed to count the days from midnight to midnight. The Jews were not. For them, sunset and sunrise were the determining points. What we call the small hours of the morning they might call the late hours of the night. It all depends where one begins. Now Matthew himself explains his own expression by adding: "As it began to dawn towards the first day of the week." His own explanation ought to suffice. It is true some have said Matthew simply copied out two contradictory statements and put them side by side. As, however, the first Gospel is clearly compiled by a man who was not insane, this solution has not recommended itself to many.

The second alleged discrepancy is as to the NUMBER OF WOMEN. Four women are mentioned by name, the two Marys, Salome (the mother of the sons of Zebedee), and Johanna, Chuza's wife, and it is clearly implied that there were more. The number is simply indefinite. They were the women who followed Christ from Galilee, the women that beheld where Christ was laid on Friday evening. For all we know, there may have been six or eight—there were certainly at least five, although we know only the names of four. There is nothing to suggest that they all came to the tomb at the same time, or that they came from the same direction. They may have come in two or three groups, and Mary Magdalene may have been there for some minutes quite alone. In the Gospel of St John it might appear that Mary Magdalene is alone, yet when she speaks to Peter and John she says: "They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and *we* know not where they have laid Him," clearly implying that she had not been alone at the tomb. Note, however, that to the supposed gardener she says, "I do not know where they have laid Him." She was then, apparently alone.

A hundred suggestions may be made as to the sequence of events on that Sunday morning. Now if any one tallies with the accounts of the Evangelists it is sufficient to show that any charge of contradiction brought against them is simply absurd. The Gospels are mere summaries of happenings told by independent witnesses, and it would be strange if we could, without further evidence, at once reconcile all statements one with another. If we could, no doubt the charge would be "Collusion," as now it is "Con-

tradiction." The Gospels do not say that Mary Magdalene was the first to see the angels at the tomb and hear the message of the Resurrection, but that she was the first to see the Risen Lord Himself. Supposing then some women had made an appointment to meet at the tomb, after the Sabbath, as soon as there was light enough at dawn to proceed with their work of applying their spices for the proper burial of Jesus. The world had still to wait sixteen hundred years for the invention of watches and chronometers, but they had rough and ready means of counting the hours. The women arrive within a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, of each other, not necessarily coming from one direction or going back one way. Mary Magdalene comes first with one or more of her companions. She finds the tomb open, and the body gone, but sees no vision of angels, and forthwith runs to fetch Peter, who, though outrun by John, arrives, say half-an-hour or three-quarters of an hour, later. Meanwhile, some of the Magdalene's companions who have stayed in the neighbourhood of the tomb, and some other women who arrived later, have gone to the tomb, seen the angels, received the message, and also, at the angel's request, gone to tell "His disciples and Peter." I say angels, though they appeared like young men clad in white. It was only afterwards, when the full truth dawned upon them, afterwards when they had seen the Risen Master, that they realised that these young men in white were not mere mortals, but angelic spirits in the guise of men. One group saw one such young man, clothed in a long white garment, sitting on the right side of the tomb; another group, wandering about in perplexity in the neighbourhood of the tomb, saw also a

young man. Later on, when these groups met, they would naturally refer to the two young men that had been seen, and thus St Luke would naturally speak of two men having stood near the women in shining garments. These women had received the message, but Jesus they had not seen. Now the Magdalene returns with Peter and John. No one now is near the tomb, the women have gone to deliver their news. Peter and John remain a few moments, and now Mary Magdalene is alone at the tomb, and Jesus shows Himself to her in the guise of a gardener, calls her by her name, and she answers "Rabboni." She then is the first to see Him, but soon afterwards the same Master appears to the women on the road, who indeed, at the tomb, and in the garden, and on the way, had not spoken to a soul about what they had seen—not a word—for they were afraid to let so great a secret out before they had told the disciples. They were, no doubt, in breathless anxiety to reach some of the disciples—there is nothing to suggest that the Apostles were all together in the same place. The Magdalene's news that she had seen Him herself seems to have come much later in Apostolic circles, for the two going to Emmaus in the afternoon had only heard of the empty tomb and the angels. Perhaps the Magdalene went to tell Jesus's mother first, or other women friends, as she had not been told to go to the "disciples and Peter," but merely to His "brethren," to James, perhaps, to whom Our Lord appeared later on especially. These women held Jesus by the feet, and worshipped Him, and Jesus said to them likewise: "Go tell My brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me."

Thus the news spread, and when Jesus had appeared

to Simon, and to the eleven gathered together at eventide, then preparations must have been made for the great journey northward of scores, perhaps of hundreds, of His disciples ; for the eleven remained at Jerusalem still a whole week, persuading, and arguing, and witnessing.

It must have been a hard task, for even one of themselves, Thomas, who was not there on Sunday evening, would not believe till he saw and felt. At last began the great journey to the mountain, which Jesus had appointed unto them, as St Matthew states. We learn from St Paul that Christ appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once. That, I suppose, was *the* great meeting arranged for by Our Lord.

Thus might the Gospels be made to harmonize, thus, and in many other ways ; and any one way is sufficient to show that it is vain to speak of contradictions in the narratives ; there are lacunæ in our knowledge, that is all. It shall be our delight, no doubt, to know details, when we ourselves, in the life to come, shall fall at His feet and embrace them, when He shall call each of us by our own name as He called Mary, and when we shall answer “ Rabboni ” in loving adoration for ever.

APPENDIX

THE CHURCH AND THE USE OF THE BIBLE

A Paper read at Cambridge Biblical Congress, Cambridge, 1921

KNOWING herself the infallible guardian of Christ's revelation and the custodian of God's covenanted means of grace, the Catholic Church has throughout the centuries with singular fidelity kept amongst her many treasures the Sacred Scriptures which God confided to her care.

Though sin and human frailty have left their mark on all human endeavours, the guardianship of the Sacred Scriptures is not merely a human office, no more than the guardianship of the faith, of the priesthood, of the Blessed Eucharist. Hence the hand of God was with His Church that she should never fail in the task which He gave her to do.

True, her authority does not rest on any written documents, she can teach and rule and sanctify without the use of any Bible. She knows that her word is God's Word, whether it stands written or not, but God among His many gifts in the superabundance of His goodness also gave her inspired Scriptures to use as she saw fit in the teaching and sanctifying of men. Nineteen hundred years ago God gave her the Old Testament as an heirloom of the Ancient Covenant.

As the Jews in the days of Christ were uncertain as to the exact Canon of their own Sacred Scriptures, waiting till in due succession a prophet should come to point out any further books God had inspired—as Josephus tells us—God made *her* that prophet and she adopted the larger, the Alexandrian Canon, whereas fallen Jewry restricted the number of its sacred books to the shorter list known as the Palestinian Canon.

Yet she did not indiscriminately adopt whatever a Greek Codex, or a floating opinion of scattered Jewry might endorse. Three and four Maccabees; three and four Esdras, and the prayer of Manasses, or the Psalms of Solomon she set aside. She never proclaimed as inspired the famous cycle of writings covered by the name of Enoch, or the so-called Sibylline Oracles or the so-called Testaments of the XII. Patriarchs.

Many of these ancient and venerable writings contained beautiful and sublime things which might appear useful for her propaganda, and which at first seemed sacred to some of her children. None the less she set them aside as not inspired. Again, not blindly did she take the Alexandrian Bible as it stood, for the LXX. translation of Daniel she set aside and deliberately adopted that of Theodotion.

Then God gave her the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament. The Holy Ghost, who had inspired Jewish writers, deigned to inspire some writers of the Christian dispensation. He acted in the excess of His bounty, for the infallible authority of the Church founded by Christ would in itself have sufficed to retain intact Christ's teaching throughout the ages, but He wished thus to assist her in carrying out the

task to defend and to explain the doctrine confided to her.

Though not necessary, it was meet and just that some documents of early Christianity should not merely bear the stamp of historical truth and authority, but the character of inspiration by God. This fact of the divine inspiration of some early Christian writings, a fact which in itself is a hidden thing known only to God, God revealed to His Church. Amongst the mass of early writings she pointed out as written by God—not the *Didache*, not the *Epistle of Clement* or of *Barnabas*, not the so-called *Gospel of Peter* or the *Protoevangelium Jacobi*, not the *Odes of Solomon*, not the so-called *Acts of John*, but the present twenty-seven books of the New Testament and none other. Mark and Luke may never have seen the Saviour: none the less their biographies of Him were inspired by God; prejudice for the time might combat the *Apocalypse* of John or lack of knowledge stand in the way of the spread of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* or some of the *Catholic Epistles* but she guaranteed their inspiration and her word prevailed. These books then she handed as inspired to her children, who before long made their translations into Latin and Syriac and Sahidic and Bohairic and Armenian. These books she defended against the followers of Marcion and some Gnostics of the second century and their followers. The interpretation of these books she controlled from the first when the enthusiastic devotion of her children filled the world with commentaries on the Sacred Text. The Church might sometimes frown on the excessive allegorism of Alexandria or the excessive literalism of Antioch, she might now

and then indicate the true meaning of a text against heretical abuse, but there was nothing repressive or harsh in her guidance.

One thing she decided from the first: her devotional life should be based on the Scriptures. Her official song-book should be the Psalter and the Canticles of the Old and New Testament. Her Sundays and her feast-days should be marked by the reading of the Scriptures. She would indeed write her own prayers too and her hymns, but remove from her liturgy all traces of Scripture texts, and you have taken away four-fifths of the whole. Enter her churches and remain but a short while and you will hear her ministers chant or recite words of her great treasure the Holy Scriptures. "Faith cometh by hearing," said St Paul, and thus likewise she intended that the knowledge of the Scriptures should come, normally, to the bulk of her children, for the overwhelming majority of mankind never has and perhaps never will learn to read before Christ comes again to judge the living and the dead.

So far so good, many think, but then a change came. We do not quarrel with the Church of the early centuries, the days of the open Bible, but we find the attitude of ecclesiasticism completely altered during the long centuries of Mediævalism. Then the Church, so it is thought, fell from her high estate and with grim determination substituted herself for the written Word of God and in the West kept the Bible in Latin lest the laity should read it. She locked up her treasure and kept it locked for some five hundred years till the Reformation broke that lock and gave the open book into the hands of every one.

Now the first part of this accusation is easily over-

come. The anathemas against all gainsayers of the early Councils are as stern and peremptory as any of the most Mediæval ones, and she who uttered them claimed to be the sole arbiter of all Christian doctrine and the sole divinely authorised exponent of Scripture, from the first century to the ninth as absolutely as from the ninth to the sixteenth. An appeal of private interpretation of Scripture against the decision of the Church, an appeal to the Bible against the Catholic Episcopate in Council would have been disallowed at Chalcedon as much as at Trent.

But the second part of this indictment, because more vague, is not capable of so brief an answer. The attitude of the Eastern Church is sometimes favourably compared with that of the Catholic, or, as some would style it—Latin Christianity, in that it “preserved the primitive attitude in the matter and did not interfere in the making of Russian or Bulgarian translations.” But the comparison is surely faulty. Considering the multitudinous translations into almost every dialect of Europe which arose previous to the Reformation, considering the astounding industry of Dominicans and Franciscans on the Bible text during those centuries, a comparison of Western Europe with Eastern lands, with their sparse output of vernaculars and commentaries is surely overwhelmingly in favour of the popularity of the Bible in the Catholic Church. True the Eastern Church did not interfere in the making of a Bulgarian translation, but the first translation into modern Bulgarian is the version of St Matthew in 1823. They like many other Slav tribes used the Old Slavic translations, which in time had become as unintelligible to the common folk as the Latin gradually

became to the neo-Latin races. There was, I believe, no complete Slav Bible in Russian hands before the Bible of Gennadius in 1499, and that Bible was in old Slavic and not in the language of the people. There never existed, I understand, an ancient Rumanian translation at all, the earliest being of the middle of the seventeenth century. Bible reading may not have been popular in some lands of the West, but until better informed, I wish to express my extreme scepticism as to its frequency in the East. I am not aware of any prohibitions in the West against a Catholic Version in Native Irish or against the reading thereof, but it would surely be hazardous to conclude that in the Middle Ages, or after, the Irish more than others were given to reading the Bible in their native tongue. A number of causes combined to make all those who could read at all in Ireland read Latin, or Saxon, or Norman French or English, but not the ancient Gaelic. Thus the absence of prohibitions, like most negative arguments, is a very weak one for the attitude of the Eastern Church.

But surely the record of the Catholic Church repeatedly forbidding the reading of the Scriptures by the laity can hardly be described as an effort to further the knowledge of the Scriptures. This is no doubt the thought in the minds of many, and recently even most respected scholars of this very University have laboured to emphasize the repressive activities of the Church during the Middle Ages in this respect and the lack of acquaintance with the Scriptures in the ordinary clergy and laity during that time.

While paying due deference to the erudition of these scholars and the sincerity of their endeavours to ascertain the real facts, it must not be forgotten that

in any history facts can be so marshalled—and that without any conscious bias—as to create an impression at variance with the true state of affairs, viz., of repression, where in reality great latitude existed, and of ignorance, where in reality knowledge was widely diffused. Naturally we must judge the Middle Ages by the principles of the Middle Ages, and the Catholic Church by hers. At no time in the past has she ever known, nor does she know to-day any divine command to read the Scriptures, she still rests on the standpoint of antiquity that all Scripture, given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in justice, and she has never moved from that to the modern and Protestant conception that Scripture is necessary for salvation, or its reading the necessary duty of a Christian man, or at least a duty which takes precedence over all others, or the main source of grace for clergy and laity. If one searches the records of the pre-Reformation Church for utterances to that effect, one is obviously doomed to disappointment, for it is seeking Protestantism before it existed, it is hoping to find in Catholicism what would be in contradiction to its own innermost nature.

But if one first grasps that fundamental Catholic principle and then interrogates the Middle Ages again, one will find it full of an intense love of the Scriptures and a great desire that all should know them in their own measure, and one marvels how much knowledge of them was spread by a loving hand in the hard and difficult soil of the new nations forming in Europe.

A career of repression, it is said, but hardly with much truth. Nearer to the truth is the statement of

a modern scholar recently: Toleration in principle and distrust in practice. All said and done during the whole Middle Ages no decree of Pope or General Council existed forbidding the translation of the Scriptures or the reading of them by the laity. The letters of Pope Innocent III. of 1199 to the diocese of Metz, and those parts of them which were embodied in the Decretal of Gregory IX. "Cum Ex injuncto" did not forbid these things, as is distinctly admitted. Moreover the official commentators of Canon Law during the Middle Ages themselves did not understand them to do so, which is again an acknowledged fact. Local Councils were stringent against Bible reading by the laity, to name but the famous Council of Toulouse in 1229, or the Council of Oxford two hundred years later in 1408, but all these were immediately caused by local needs. Those prohibitions were, however, hedged around and circumscribed, as that of Oxford, forbidding any future version to be made or read till that translation be approved by the diocesan of the place or by a Provincial Council. This decree Lyndwood, the great contemporary lawyer, interpreted as only forbidding the reading of any future version without approbation, not the reading of any existing version. It is an historical fact that between the years 1200 and 1400 heretics arose in Europe, who appealed to the Written Word of God against the Living Teacher, who handed them that very Word as written by God. Locally stringent measures were passed to safeguard the true interpretation of the Bible, but never at any time even of the greatest stress was sacrifice made of principle, never was it maintained by authority that God meant the Bible for the clergy, not the laity, or

that the reading of the Scriptures by the laity was in itself wrong or blameworthy.

If the Church was not divinely guided and her desire was not genuine that the Scriptures should be used by all where possible, it would be difficult to account for the fact that in the days when she was fighting for her very existence against mighty heretics, who shook the very foundation on which she rested, she was never betrayed into claiming that the Scriptures were made by God for the teaching body alone and that the laity, by the mere fact of their being laity, were in principle excluded from using the Scriptures. Moreover, the Church's extreme liberality or broad-mindedness in these matters could hardly be more astoundingly vindicated than by the very contention which is made by many modern scholars that the vernacular versions used in mediæval monasteries and nunneries and by such wealthy persons as could afford to possess the costly treasure of a manuscript Bible were based on, if not identical with, translations of heretical origin. The early Italian, French, Provençal, Slav and German mediæval versions are said ultimately to be derived from Waldensian sources; the Early English Bibles from Wycliffite sources; be it so, but then we have to face the fact the Church which used her utmost endeavour to destroy Waldensianism and Lollardism, could with utmost composure leave Waldensian and Wycliffite Bibles in the hands of her children, as long as the versions were correct and her children were safeguarded against abuse of them.

Truly the spirit of the Church has changed but a little! At this very Congress it is proposed as a matter of discussion whether it would not be profitable for us Catholics to abandon the English

version used by us for about four hundred years, and made by those exiled and persecuted for their faith in those days, and with the necessary corrections to adopt the authorized version made in direct opposition to the Catholic Church by her bitterest foes. Whether this idea will ever be carried out I do not know—I devoutly hope not. But that it is allowed as a matter of lawful discussion cannot be thought out of harmony with the spirit which could appropriate the versions of Peter Waldo in the twelfth, and of John Wyclif in the fourteenth century, if such appropriation be a fact.

A real point from which a true appreciation of the popularity of the Bible could be derived are the Sermons of the Middle Ages. Many thousands of them are to-day in print. A mere glance through say the six hundred sermons of St Bonaventure or St Bernard, or St Thomas or St Hugh or St Victor convinces one that the minds of those people were saturated with the Scriptures. They did not merely use the Scriptures in their technical discussions—“*Suspecta est mihi veritas quam non confirmat scripturarum auctoritas*,” said St Richard—not merely as a convenient book of quotations to round off a sentence, but they almost thought in terms of the Scriptures. If in printing all words and phrases which betray a Scripture origin were put in italics, the sermons of these mediæval worthies would appear a Mosaic of Holy Writ. Not only does this argue their own knowledge of Scripture, but also to a certain extent that of their hearers. They would never have used their thousand quaint devices and applications of remote texts unless they hoped that their audience would naturally recognize them. The schoolmen are often thought of as

dry-as-dust logicians and metaphysicians, making more of Aristotle than the Holy Writ, but as a matter of fact all the great leaders of Scholasticism wrote extensive Scripture commentaries. And while busy with metaphysics they made gigantic Concordances to the Bible. Surely only great love of Scripture would drive any set of men to create a Concordance.

If it be argued that all this mediæval scholarship did not teach the masses, who did not read Latin, it may be answered that the vast majority of those who in the Middle Ages could read at all, could read Latin, and that it is difficult to ascertain precisely how far the spoken Latin was understood even by lay people, at least in the New Latin countries and to a certain extent even in England where Norman French remained the language of the upper classes for almost three hundred years after the Conquest. Moreover, those who themselves were thus saturated with Scripture, must have spoken to the people in their vernacular, and it would be unnatural if they did not use in the vernacular the Scriptures they used so incessantly when they spoke or wrote in Latin. It is true that the bare text during the Middle Ages was perhaps less known popularly than this text was known in England fifty years ago, in those now bygone days when English people used to read the Bible. Who, however, can say that the Rhymed Bibles of the Middle Ages, which contained the substance of the Bible as far as it was necessary for devotional use by the majority, were not the best means to perpetuate in that rough age the knowledge of the true contents of the Inspired Volume?

Those who are best able to judge, see in the rem-

nants of vernacular poetry of English Middle Ages and in their miracle-plays a proof that the substance of the Scriptures must have been astoundingly well known in those days. Few editors of Chaucer have not remarked on his remarkable familiarity with the contents of the Bible. Can one not see in the conduct of the Church during the Middle Ages, instead of a career of steady repression, an incessant endeavour to make it better known? But her methods were her own. The Bible is a Library, not a single book, and she thought it more conducive to the understanding of that Library to give out those seventy books gradually, one by one; the Psalter, the Gospels, the Apocalypse, the Acts, and so on. Epistles of St Paul, in which there are many things hard to understand, came later; and parts of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers could come much later. And before the bare text was handled, rhymed paraphrases of large sections had flooded Europe. Even in Waldensian or Wycliffite circles the vast majority could not use the Bible text, owing to its costliness and owing to the inability to read. One person had a book for a dozen who merely heard it recited and learned it by heart. Would it have been wise and consistent with love and reverence for the Bible to commit its very text to the lips of the populace? Would they have kept it intact? Would they not have embroidered upon it? Before the invention of printing would the correct text have survived the ordeal of the fallible wayward memory not merely of a non-reading, but an ill-informed multitude? Would it have survived the ordeal, the weird interpretations of the untutored masses? A few days ago I received a bundle of literature from the Israelite

House of David, Benton Harbour, Michigan, U.S.A., addressed by a certain Benjamin—whose portrait graces the book—to the twelve tribes of Israel scattered abroad. It is all a string of Scripture texts in the most amazing fashion, but the religion therein proclaimed bears but a slight resemblance to Christianity. If this is possible in the twentieth century, what would they have done in the tenth? If the many Correctoria of the Middle Ages of Theodulf and Alcuin, Stephen Harding and Maniacoria of the Parisian University and the Dominican Order did not maintain the Vulgate intact, what would the populace have done?

It has been said that the Catholic Church did not have the interest or even the common sense to use the well-known precautions by which the Jews checked the growth of further corruptions in their Old Testament text and Mohammedans in their Koran. Quite so, but then Post-Christian Judaism and Mohammedanism like Protestantism are religions based upon a book. For these three religions, later Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Protestantism, the mechanical keeping intact of a certain written text is intrinsically vital, for Catholicism it is not. Catholicism is a living organism independent of any written text. The Sacred Book is one of her Treasures, one of her means of sanctification of her children, the Bible on her lips is a living thing. Her existence does not depend on a dead letter of a text, only on her lips is the Bible fully spirit and life. Hence, strange to say, these three religions of a book have indeed endeavoured to keep the *text* unchanged, but not claiming any infallible authority for its interpretation, having given over its *meaning* to the unaided specu-

lation of individuals. At least in the case of the third mentioned religion we know with what disastrous results. The Catholic Church is and ever was interested in the meaning of the book, hence only her priests should be authorized exponents, hence she will fulminate her anathema against those who misinterpret the meaning of a text, hence for a time and in a limited locality she will forbid her children to read the text for themselves except under due precautions, for the thing that finally matters to her is the *meaning* not the bare wording of a text. What doth it profit a man to know that the Saviour physically uttered the syllables of the sentences: "This is my Body, this is the Chalice of my Blood; Whose sins you shall forgive, those are forgiven them. Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build My Church," if he possesses no guarantee that he interprets the meaning of these words rightly?

Though she does not guard the text with the superstition of a fetish, she gives it that care which an infallible teacher should give a divine text-book, and when the Revision of the Vulgate is finished, the New Vulgate in matters doctrinal and devotional will be found surprisingly like the text we have always known.

But whatever we may hold of the Middle Ages, was not the reading of the Bible solemnly forbidden by Pope Pius IV. in 1564, and was not this decree first removed by Benedict XIV. in 1757, almost two hundred years later?

Two hundred years almost of a Bible closed to the laity? No, it was not closed, the laity had to obtain leave to read it through their confessor or parish priest. The reading was certainly restricted but it

was not forbidden. Laws in a living institution are living things. This law had gradually fallen into practical desuetude long before Benedict XIV., and had been practically interpreted that any version with ecclesiastical authority, or with explanatory notes was *per se* authorised for the laity. Our Douay version itself was made and published during this so-called closed period and it certainly was not originally made for the clergy, who in those days as ever afterwards, remained more familiar with the Latin. During that so-called closed time the German Jesuits of Mainz produced and published again and again their Catholic German Bible. During that time Mœrentorf's Dutch Bible was many a time republished. French Catholic translations of the whole or of parts of the Bible were made by Jesuits, Dominicans and Oratorians. Bossuet himself produced French translations of Biblical books, and the Bible of Sacy printed with the authority of the Archbishop of Cambrai had an almost phenomenal success. It is true that it fell under Papal censure, but this it merited on account of the temerity of its translations, and when revised and corrected it was reprinted and used extensively by Catholics.

The Jesuit, James Wujek, published his Polish Bible in 1599.

This Papal decree of Pius IV. was subject, like all human enactments in a living organization, to interpretation, modification, contrary custom, tacit dispensation and desuetude, and Benedict XIV. rather sanctioned the existing custom, outside Italy and Spain, than reversed his predecessor's legislation.

To some all this may seem special pleading. When the authorities speak against Bible versions appeal is

made to the bulk of the clergy and laity ; and when clergy and laity speak against Bible versions appeal is made to the fact that the supreme authorities did not do so. Yet in reality it is no special pleading. Supposing an accusation were made that the story of German War Camps in England had been one of incessant and wanton repression, it would be perfectly consistent in an unbiassed historian when some apparently ruthless authoritative regulations were brought forward to prove this, to ask how as a matter of fact they were applied by individual officers ; and when some ruthless actions of individual officers were brought forward, to ask how far as a matter of fact they were supported by authoritative regulations. For those two things continually interact and the one cannot be appreciated without the other.

Again it may be urged that during the last hundred years the Church has stood outside the feverish activity displayed by non-Catholics in the matter of Bible Study.

Here again I submit that she did well. The vast output of literature, more especially among non-Catholic Germans, has served to originate and to maintain theses which barely survived their originators or which, as a wag once put it, went, when too old for a German University, to Oxford to die. With regard to the New Testament the half of it has proved idle speculation. The obscurest Mediæval productions are not more out of date than many a doctor's dissertation of only thirty years ago. The waste of scholarly energy in matters Biblical has been and still is prodigious. This restless searching without compass or guide, the whimsical suggestions

sometimes as to authorship, date or analysis of a book, this strange display of real erudition just to overthrow all former convictions to start some fantastical notion, this vast erudition without common sense, this launching of startling novelties, of which the author seemed to think "*si non é vero é bene trovato*," if the Church stood somewhat outside it, hers is the desire for sobriety in scholarship and caution in handling the Word of God.

When we come to ask for solid work, she has done a great deal. Her scholars have worked at St Etienne in Jerusalem under Père Lagrange, at the Catholic Faculty of Münster in Westphalia under John Nikel; at Louvain under Van Hoonacker, and Munich under Bardenhewer, at Ore Place under Albert Cordannin, and in quite recent years the Biblical Institute at Rome has produced true scholarly work, as good as the very best.

Amazing novelties her scholars are not bent on producing, and hence their names are not known by the man in the street, and alas, where the principle obtains "*Catholicum est, non legitur*," their names are little mentioned, but the work is solid and lasting none the less.

Sometimes people have insisted that we Catholics have not merely stood aside, but we are continually hindered and hampered by contemporary repressive legislation, and edicts of the Holy Office, and of the Biblical Commission. As an instance recently the Responsum of the Holy Office of 1897 on the Comma Johanneum is brought forward! But non-Catholics fail to grasp the strength and the value of these disciplinary degrees or doctrinal degrees which do not claim infallible authority. Non-

Catholics sometimes flourish some degree of this kind in the face of a Catholic scholar, and taunt him saying: "How can you be a true scholar with that?" but the Catholic scholar only smiles and goes on with his studies. Such decisions of authority are received with true internal as well as external reverence. With internal reverence, for they are issued by men appointed by the Church to watch over these matters, and God's guidance is more likely to be with them than with individual scholars. They are not infallible, but they are in authority, and after an admonition the chastened scholar goes back to work with greater care and caution and humility searching for the truth lest he be wrong. I have never heard sane people complaining that the yellow triangles put up along the great highways by the Automobile Associations are the disgrace and death of all motor-ing. The motorist that disregards them is a fool and so is the Catholic scholar who, when he has received a caution, does not anxiously and submissively and humbly re-examine his thesis and his proofs, well knowing that he at least has no divine guarantee of inerrancy. If then he finds no flaw, he searches the more for proofs to establish a thing which he honestly holds true. In those exceedingly few cases that he is told not to publish his findings, he waits, great is the truth and it will prevail. A little more trust in the ultimate triumph of truth would save scholars much heartburning.

But ninety-nine out of every hundred of these decisions answer the question: "Can it be *safely* taught, or called in question, or denied?" by a simple No. This merely means that it cannot be safely done as yet. It has the homely meaning of "Safety first."

Look well before and behind before you leap from the vehicle on which you are. The Responsum of 1897 did not prevent Cardinal Vaughan's letter to Wilfrid Ward, saying that the Holy Office did not intend to close the discussion, nor Künstle's Monograph on the subject with the Imprimatur of the Archbishop of Freiburg. To introduce Pope Innocent III. into the matter is a misunderstanding.

The wholesome guidance of the Catholic Church in these matters has saved us Catholics from many weird and wild theories, which only retard true progress in scholarship. To make progress you must start from given data—no one can proceed forward unless he starts from some point.

We have of late made giant strides in textual criticism. The Greek text of the New Testament books, as it left the hands of its authors, is now practically finally settled barring small minutiae. The Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament originals is not yet in this satisfactory state, but the Cambridge Septuagint and the Revised Vulgate, and the incessant work to find the true original underlying text previous to the Massorah is proceeding apace. Contemporary history of the Old Testament and the New Testament is searched with keenest eyes for illustrations and historical setting, and when all that is done the Bible will be held fit to be put on the shelves of the erudite as the perfect edition with notes of an ancient classic. A triumph of scholarship, worthy to stand in a series of Ancient Books of the East to be read for pleasure and literary joy as rarely as a book in the giant work of Max Müller, *but for the Catholic Church!* Anyone who is not blind to signs of the times sees with what

alarming speed we are approaching that solution, but when the Bible is relegated elsewhere to a Professor's library of Oriental Classics, it will still be a living thing; old yet ever new to those who cling to the Catholic Church that teaches her little ones: Children, it is the Word of God.

For if we look for a moment at the Bible with modernist eyes, what a strange and in itself useless collection of antique writings it would be!

The five books of Moses and the Book of Joshua were not compiled by these worthies as they pretend to be, but one thousand years after their death. They do indeed contain ancient material, but barring perhaps a chapter or so, even the most ancient material is still four hundred years after the days of the delivery out of Egypt. This haphazard collection of folk-lore is doctored and edited by the theological prejudices of the Jewish priests after the exile. They covered the Patriarchal past with anachronisms, and credited their remote forefathers with a religion a thousand years before it was first invented by the prophets. The Books of the Prophets themselves are a strange medley of old and new. The Prophet Isaias wrote at most one-third of what is ascribed to him, and the remainder under the pretence of prophecy is centuries later and a vaticinium ex eventu! Moreover the whole of the prophetical books is marred by the strange and unnatural assertion that they called the people *back* to their *old* religion, the religion of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whereas in reality the eighth-century prophets were the great *innovators* with their introduction of Ethical Monotheism. It was the people who naturally resisted the innovation, and desperately clung to the real religion of their forefathers:

Animism, Totemism, non-Ethical Polytheism, Human Sacrifices and Tribal Henotheism. The Psalter, which was imagined to go back in a large measure to David the King, 1000 B.C., is, barring possibly a few lines of a Psalm here and there, written centuries after he slept with his fathers, and the bulk of it written during or after the Exile or by the Maccabees. Chronicles is a book which projects in the remote past the customs and habits and exaggerations of five hundred years later, a book of fiction, not of fact. Daniel did not prophesy at the Court of Babylon, but wrote at the Maccabean Rising nearly four hundred years later. And the great ever-growing prophecy and prediction of the Messiah supposed to run like a thread through the Old Testament is a mere mirage; and the hope of Israel at the time of Christ is a fantastical dream read into the text by rabbinical casuistry.

In the New Testament the Synoptics represent the stories current in the Christian community about the Founder, soon crowned by legendary halo of supernaturalism and a cycle of miracles; containing no doubt a correct reminiscence now and then, but giving us an object of faith rather than an historical personage. The fourth Gospel is a theological treatise, not a book of history, connected with Ephesian second-century speculations. The Pastoral Epistles are anachronisms, crediting the first simple Apostles with hierarchical ambitions, utterly alien to their minds. Anachronisms of late institutional Christianity are introduced, such texts as describe the Founder's intention of building a Church on a rock and giving the keys of authority to some disciple: some texts suppose Him to have sent His disciples to baptize and teach all nations, and father on to

Him a sacramental system unknown to His simple Galilean mentality.

Such is the modern Bible. Its inspiration is diluted into a mere word—forgive me, a mere cant phrase. Some possible undefined Providence presiding over the evolution of human thought, guiding the Greeks, who had a genius for the beautiful and the intellectual, guiding the Romans, who had a genius for the law and government, and the later Jews, who seem to have possessed a certain genius for religion.

Between *that* Bible and Christianity stands as sole bulwark the Catholic Church ; between a New Testament of the Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp-Lake type and Christianity stands as a barrier the Catholic Church ; between such a Bible and Christianity stands that Divine power, which alone has a fulcrum outside the Bible. Leo XIII.'s "Providentissimus Deus," the utterance of Pius X., the recent Encyclical of Benedict XV. represent unaltered the teaching of the Church during the centuries, and the burden of this message is the application to the Written Word of God, of the Word of God-made man : "Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away."

INDEX

- Aaron, 112.
 Abgar IX. and X., 97, 114.
 Acts 2, 15.
 Acts of John, 55, 86, 220.
 Acts of Paul and Thecla, 85.
 Acts of Pilate, 168.
 Adam, 122-3.
 Adam, Second, 139.
 Agrippa I., 161, 166, 202.
 Agrippa, Roman General, 99.
 Alcimius, 170-1.
 Alcuin, 230.
 Alexander Jannæus, 171.
 Alexander Severus, 115.
 Alexander, Son of Herod and
 Mariamne, 188.
 Alexandra, Queen, 171.
 Alexandria, 29, 52, 99, 115.
 Allen, 30, 35.
 All Souls, 106.
 Ammianus, 27.
 Andrew, 61.
 Anna, Mother of Samuel, 133.
 Anna, Daughter of Phanuel, 134.
 Annas, 82 ; Firm, 174 ; Family,
 173.
 Anicetus, 56.
 Antigonos, 171.
 Antioch, 20, 52, 99-101.
 Antiochus, 97, 170.
 Antipater, 188-9.
 Antonia, Fortress, 165, 178.
 Apocalypse, 4, 72.
 Apostles' Creed, 12 ; Memoirs
 of, 58.
 Appendix to Four Gospels, 59.
 Aqueduct, 164.
 Aramaic, 75.
 Archelaus, 144, 188.
 Aretas, 194, 201-3.
 Aristides, 116.
 Aristobulus I., 171.
 Aristobulus III., 172.
 Aristobulus, Son of Herod and
 Mariamne, 188.
 Aristotle, 197.
 Arles, 99.
 Artaban III., 203.
 Ashmonean Family, 161.
 Ashmonean Palace, 199.
 Asia Minor, 7, 18, 19, 15, 54,
 56, 113.
 Assouan, 96.
 Astarte, 107.
 Athens, 54.
 Atonement, 179 ff.
 Attalus of Pergamum, 97.
 Attis, 107.
 Augustus, 16, 17, 104-5, 190,
 200-1, 161, 143.
 Baptism of Christ, 26, 124.
 Barnabas, 19, 28.
 Barnabas, Epistle of, 220.
 Barnes, Emery, 12.
 Basilides, 57.
 Beloved Disciple, 61.
 Benedict XIV., 231.
 Benjamin to XII. Tribes, 230.
 Bernard, St., Sermons, 227.
 Bethany, 80.
 Bethlehem, 18.
 Bethsaida, 77.
 Bible Reading, 221.
 Big, Prof., at Oxford, 2.
 Boethus Family, 172-174.
 Bonaventure's Sermons, 227.
 Brazen Serpent, 76.
 Brethren of Our Lord, 116.
 Britons, 98.
 Buddha, 24.
 Burkitt, 11.

- Cana, 77, 128.
 Cæsar, 16.
 Cæsar's Friend, 82.
 Cæsar, Julius, 100.
 Cæsarini, 156.
 Cæsarea, 158-9, 163-4.
 Cæsareum, 100.
 Caiaphas, 62, 161, 170, 187;
 House of, 185-6.
 Cairo University, 31.
 Caius, 161, 202.
 Caius Caligula, 202.
 Calender of Feasts, 57.
 Caligula, 16.
 Callihroe, 189.
 Capharnaum, 77.
 Cappadocia, 188.
 Capreæ, 161.
 Capua, 103.
 Carthage, 52, 96.
 Catholic Church, 12.
 Cato, 104-5.
 Catullus, 155.
 Celtic, 18.
 Census, 17-18.
 Centurion on Calvary, 68.
 Cephas, 3.
 Cerinthus, 52, 56.
 Christ, 24.
 Chrestus, 6.
 Chuza, 197.
 Cicero, 104-5.
 Cilicia, 97.
 Classics, 26.
 Claudia Procula, 204.
 Claudius, 6, 168.
 Clement, 54.
 Clement of Alexandria, reference
 to Mark, 29.
 Clement of Rome, 220.
 Cleopatra, 97.
 Cochaba, 119.
 Coins, 163.
 Colchester, 98.
 Comma Johanneum, 234.
 Conjunction of Stars, 149, 153-4.
 Corinth, 96, 207.
 Corinthians, 3, 4.
 Cry from the Cross, 38.
 Curse against Christians, 7.
 Cybele, 107.
 Cyrinus, 17.
 Cyrus, 147.
 Damascus, 201.
 Daniel, 84.
 Danube, 96.
 Daphne Park, 101.
 David, 110-2; City of, 18.
 Decapolis, 191.
 Dedication, Feast of, 76.
 Demetrius, 171.
 Demoniac Boy, 37-70.
 Derbe, 19.
 Desposynoi, 118.
 Deuteronomy, 46.
 Diamaphereshe, or Four Sepa-
 rate, 23.
 Diana of Ephesians, 107.
 Diatessaron, or Four Combined,
 23.
 Didache, 12, 220.
 Discrepancies in Resurrection
 Story, 212-217.
 Divorce in Matthew, 46.
 Documents, Aramaic of Luke,
 131-3.
 Domitian, 54, 92, 117-8.
 Douay, Version, Note, 113.
 Edessa, 96-7.
 Edinburgh, 99.
 Einstein, 150, 153.
 Elias, 67.
 Elizabeth, Cousin of Mary, 112,
 117, 130, 132-3.
 Emmanuel, 67, 128.
 Emmaus, 14.
 Emperor, 11, bis.
 Ensigns of Roman Troops, 162.
 Ephesians, Ignatius, Letter to,
 112.
 Ephesus, 52, 54, 55, 60, 99.
 Epictetus, 108.
 Epistles, 2-3-4.
 Essenes, 90.
 Estha, 114, 116.
 Euphrates, 98.
 Euripedes, 27.
 Eusebius, 12, 119, 168.
 Eve, First and Second, 121-2,

- Feeding of Five Thousand, 69.
- Fire at Antioch, 100-1.
- Foakes-jackson, 239.
- Foundation, 182-3.
- Gabbatha, 81.
- Gabriel, 112.
- Gadara, 191-2.
- Galatia, 19.
- Galatians, 4.
- Galileans, 159, 165; Killed by Pilate, 165.
- Galilee, 24; Lake of, 77-8.
- Gamaliel II., 8.
- Garments of High Priests, 178.
- Garizim, 79, 166.
- Gates of Trajan, 98.
- Gennadius, Bible of, 223.
- Gennesaret, 77-8.
- Germanicus, 101.
- Gladiatorial Shows, 105-6.
- Gnostics, 55, 57, 70.
- Greece, 15.
- Halda, or Sekailat, 201.
- Harnack, 4, 12, 30.
- Hebrews, Epistle to the, 68, 92.
- Heli, 110, 113-4, 123.
- Heracles, 115.
- Heracleon, 57.
- Herod Agrippa, 28, 57, 61.
- Herod Antipas, 135, 167, 188, 204.
- Herod the Great, 17, 85, 97, 118-9, 131, 134, 141-4, 178, 192.
- Herodias, 197.
- Herodians, 77.
- High Priests, 176.
- Holy Office, Responsum of, 234.
- Horace, 27, 146.
- House of Caiaphas, 185-6.
- Hypsistarians, 148.
- Hyrcanus, 171, 188.
- Iconium, 19, 20.
- Ignatius, Martyr, 112.
- Infancy, Account of, 25; Story of, 30.
- Irenæus, St., 28, 56, 113, 121.
- Isaias, 67, 108, 147.
- Isis, 197.
- Islam, 5, 24.
- Italy, 15.
- Jairus, Daughter of, 62.
- James, 3, 12, 14.
- James, Brother of John, 57, 61.
- James, Brother of the Lord, 117.
- Janus, Temple of, 102.
- Jason, 171.
- Jerusalem, 24, 25; Ruin of, 14.
- Joachim, 125-6.
- Joanna, Wife of Chuza, 135.
- John, Apostle, 2, 26, 28, 32.
- John, Baptist, 14, 15, 26, 194 ff.
- John, Elder, 26, 28, 32.
- John, Gospel, 5, 23, 51, 88.
- John, Mark, 28.
- Joseph, St., 15, 17, 25, 100, 110-1.
- Joseph, Caiaphas, 161, 172, 174.
- Josephus, 10-14.
- Judas, 25, 61.
- Judas, Cousin of our Lord, 117.
- Judea, Colony, 157.
- Julius Africanus, 114-5.
- Justin, 28, 58-59, 113, 121, 167.
- Juvenal, 27, 107, 155.
- Kirsopp Lake, 239.
- Koran, 31.
- Kunstle's Monograph, 236.
- Lagrange, 234.
- Lake, Professor, 212.
- Language of Palestine, 160.
- Latin, 18.
- Lazarus, 39.
- Letter of Pilate, 167.
- Lucan, 155.
- Lucilius, 146.
- Luke, St., 9, 15, 16, 20, *passim*, 69.
- Luke of Antioch, 208.
- Lupanar, 106.
- Lycaonia, 19.
- Lycaonian, 18, 19.
- Lyndwood, 225.
- Lyons, 52.
- Lysanias, 202-3.
- Lystra, 19.

- Maccabees, *see* Ashmoneans, 142, 171.
 Macedonia, 15.
 Machærus, 196.
 Macrobius, 143.
 Magi, 141-154.
 Malchus, 83.
 Malchus' Ear, 42.
 Mandæans, 194.
 Manna, 76.
 Marcus Aurelius, 108.
 Mariamne, Wife of Herod, 142.
 Miamne, Daughter of Boethus, 173.
 Marriage Intertribal, 120.
 Mark, St., 14, 15, 22, 32, *passim*.
 Martial, 155, 169.
 Martial Satires, 105.
 Mary, 15, 17, 25, 62, 67, 111.
 Mary Magdalene, 41, 215 6.
 Matthew, 15, 22-23, 30, 33, 50.
 Max Müller, 236.
 Mazdeans, 146.
 Meleager of Gadara, 192.
 Melgarth, 97.
 Memra, 81.
 Menelaus, 170.
 Mesopotamia, 114.
 Messiah, 18, 67, 69, 70, 93, 111, 122, 133, 146, 150, 195.
 Messianic Prophecies, 10.
 Middle Ages, 31; Bible in the, 224 ff.
 Mines in Spain and Sardinia, 97.
 Miracles, 16; in Matthew alone, 34.
 Mithra, 107.
 Moerentorf's Bible, 232.
 Money-Changers, 84.
 Montanism, 52, 57.
 Montefiore, 14.
 Moses, 14, 24, 40, 67, 69, 166.
 Multiplication of Loaves, 40.
 Nathan, 123.
 Nathan's Line, 113-4.
 Nathanael, 60, 61.
 Nazareth, 18.
 Nero, 3, 6, 16, 92, 131, 145.
 Nicapolis, 114.
 Nikel, 234.
 Numbers, Book of, 147.
 Objectivity of Star, 152.
 Onias III., 170.
 Origen, 115, 168.
 Osrhoene, 114.
 Oxford, Council of, 225.
 Palestine, 15, 24, 76.
 Papias, 28, 57.
 Parables in St. Luke, 15.
 Paschal Lamb, 76.
 Passover, 86.
 Patmos, 54.
 Paul, St., 4, 19, 20.
 Paul, St., Epistles of, 68.
 Paulinism, Petrinism and, 91.
 Pedigrees, 118.
 Pentecost, 20.
 Perichorion, 20.
 Persia, Spain to, 13, 21, 96.
 Persius, 155.
 Peter, St., 25, 26, 31, 61.
 Peter, St., Epistles of, 22; First Epistle of, 27; Second, 2.
 Peter, St., absent from Jerusalem, 30.
 Peter, Death, 59.
 Peter, Memoirs of, 28.
 Petrinism and Paulinism, 91.
 Petronius' Miscellanies, 105.
 Phannias, 172.
 Pharaoh, 97.
 Pharisees, 177; Denunciation of, 37, 38.
 Pharsalis, Victory at, 100.
 Pheroras, 189.
 Philemon, 27.
 Philip, St., 56, 61.
 Philip, Brother of Antipas, 200.
 Philip, Tetrarch, 190, 202.
 Philo, 166.
 Philodemus of Gadara, 192.
 Phrygia, 19.
 Phrygian, 18.
 Pillar of Scourging, 185.
 Pindar, 27.
 Pius IV., Decree of, 231-2.

- Plautus, 27.
 Pliny, 27 ; the Younger, 7.
 Pollio, 104.
 Polybius, 27.
 Polycarp, 56.
 Polycrates, 55, 56.
 Pompey, 103, 171, 192.
 Pontius Pilate, 3-6, 70, 80, 155,
 169, 190, 199, 211 ; his wife,
 34.
 Presentation in the Temple, 175.
 Procula, Claudia, Wife of Pilate,
 157.
 Protevangelium Jacobi, 220.
 Provinces, Roman, 18.
 Psalter, 31.
 Ptolemy (Gnostic), 57.
 Publicans asking the Baptist,
 195.

 Questions asked by Christ, 36-9.

 Rabbinic Dispute about Divorce,
 48.
 Resurrection, 15, 26 ; Formula
 of, 13, 205, 217.
 Return of Christ, 93.
 Rhine, 96, 98.
 Rhoda, 28.
 Rhossos, 86.
 Richard, St., 227.
 Romans, 10.
 Rome, 6, 14, 52, 56, 99.

 Sadducees, 177.
 Salathiel, 114.
 Salonika, 207.
 Samaria, 24.
 Samaritans, 76, 159.
 Samnites, 156.
 Sanhedrin, 77, 175-6.
 Sardinia, 97.
 Saul of Tarsus, 207.
 Sayings of Our Lord, 31, 33, 34.
 Scotch Border, 96.
 Shields with Dedication, 163.
 Sejanus, 157, 162, 203.
 Senate, Jewish, 175-6.
 Seneca, 108, 146.

 Sepphoris, 193.
 Serapion of Antioch, 85.
 Serapis, 107.
 Sibyllines, 147, 219.
 Sichem, 80.
 Siege of Jerusalem, 10.
 Siloe, Pool of, 81.
 Simeon of Cleophas, 117.
 Simon Barjonah, 208.
 Slavery, 102-4.
 Smyrna, 55.
 Soldiers at the Jordan, 195.
 Solomon, Odes of, 220.
 Solomon's Line, 113-4.
 Solomon's Porch, 80.
 Sophocles, 27.
 Spain to Persia, 13, 21, 97.
 Spartacus, 103.
 Stephen Harding, 230.
 Suetonius, 6, 27, 146.
 Sychar, 79.
 Synoptic Gospels, 14 ; Portrait
 of Jesus, 64.
 Syria, 15, 52.

 Tabernacles, Feast of, 76, 81-2.
 Tabor, 40.
 Tacitus, 6, 102, 146.
 Talmud, 148.
 Tatian, 58.
 Temple, Treasury, 165 ; in
 Egypt, 171 ; Building, 84.
 Terence, 27.
 Tertullian, 28, 54, 167.
 Testament of XII. Patriarchs,
 219.
 Theodore of Gadara, 192.
 Theodotion, 219.
 Theodulf, 230.
 Thermæ, 100.
 Thessalonians, 4.
 Thomas, St., 60, 61.
 Thomas Aquinas, 227.
 Thorah, 184.
 Thrace, 15, 103.
 Thycidides, 27.
 Tiberias, Lake of, 60, 193.
 Tiberius, 16, 99, 157, 162-3,
 166, 202.
 Timothy, Epistle of, 2.

- Tiridates, 145.
 Titus, Epistle of, 2.
 Toulouse, Council of, 225.
 Trajan, 167.
 Translation of the Bible, 222.
 Trinitarian Text, 66.
 Trypho, 113.
 Tunis, 28, 115.
 Twelve, The, 4.
 Tyre, 77.

 Uganda, 31.

 Valentinus, 57.
 Van Hoonacker, 234.
 Varus, 189.
 Vespasian, 117.
 Victor, St., 227.
 Virgin Birth, 111, 128, 140.
 Virgin Birth, unknown to Mark, 136.
 Virgin Birth, unknown to John, 137.

 Virgin Birth, unknown to Paul, 139.
 Virgil, 108, 146.
 Vitellius, 167, 173, 212.

 Washing of Hands, 49.
 Weizsacker, 88.
 Well of Jacob, 79.
 Whitewashing the Apostles, 43.
 Wicked Husbandmen, 66.
 Women, Status of, 105.
 Women, Four in Christ's Genealogy, 125.
 Women at the Tomb, 212-214.
 Wycliffe Bibles, 226.
 Wujek, James, S.J., 232.

 Xenophon, 27.

 Zachary, Father of the Baptist, 134.
 Zebedee's Sons, 43, 45, 60, 62, 28, 73, 74.
 Zorobabel, 114.





3 0514 00022 569